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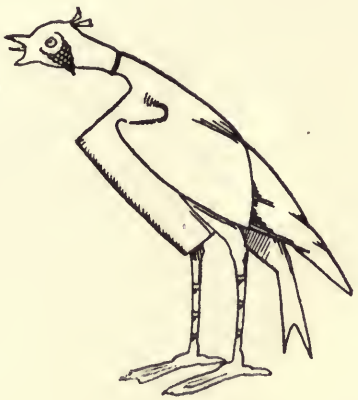
WEIRD ISLANDS



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The Ten Travellers

WEIRD ISLANDS

by Jean de
BOSSCHÈRE

LONDON
CHAPMAN AND HALL, LTD.
1921

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BOOKS WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY THE SAME AUTHOR

Béâle-Gryne
Dolorine et les Ombres
Métiers Divins
Max Elskamp
Edifices Anciens
Le Style de Leys
La Sculpture Anversoise
La Dialectique du Dessin
Twelve Occupations
Quinten Metsys
The Closed Door
Le Bourg (*shortly*)
The City Curious

Illustrated by the Author

Christmas Tales of Flanders
Beasts and Men
Gulliver's Travels

PRINTED IN ENGLAND AT THE WESTMINSTER PRESS, LONDON W.

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FOREWORD

I HEARD this fantastic story for the first time on a summer evening, and I wish to share at once the pleasure that it gave me with others, of all ages and of all tastes. I must confess, though, that when I had once begun re-telling it, I thought more of the pleasure that it was giving myself than of the pleasure that it would give to others. But we all know that the joy we take in contemplating any work of art must be measured by the joy that went to the artist's creation of it. And certainly the *Weird Islands* has given me long weeks of genuine happiness. I wish I could have it with others ; I wish others could have been there to help me while I worked, and while my friend improvised on his violin tunes as curious as Stravinsky's, and while my little green parrakeets nibbled at my brushes.

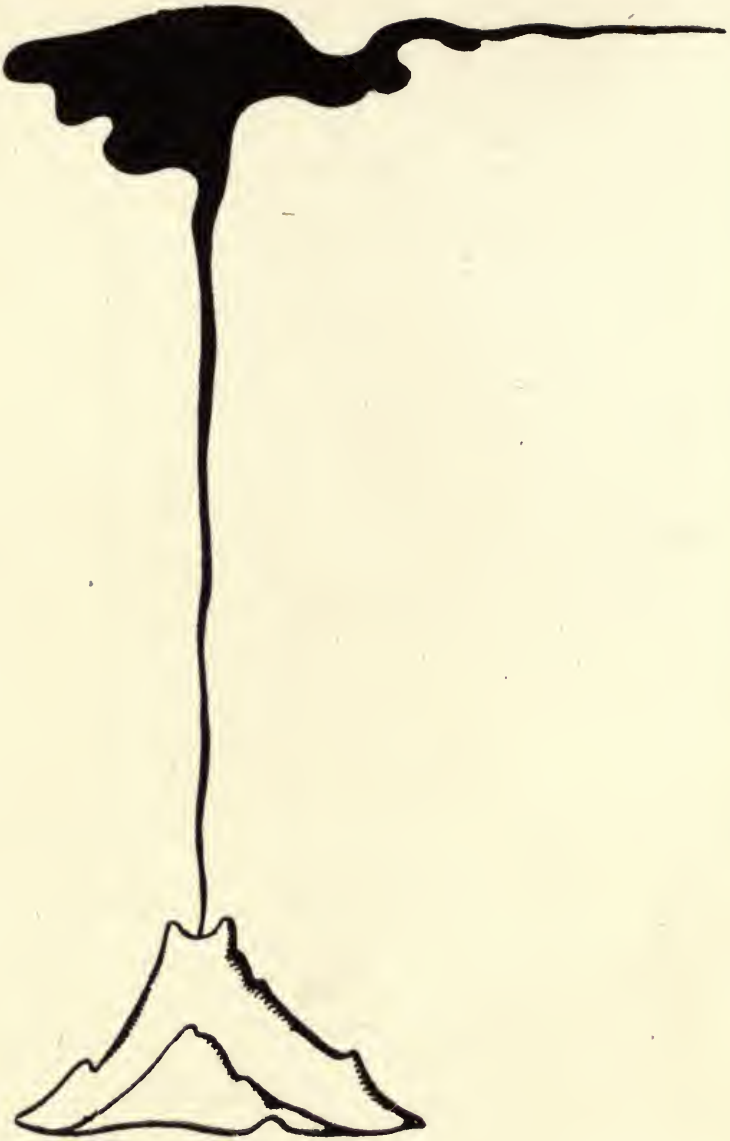
In re-telling these adventures, I did not adopt the form of a novel, because in that shape it would have taken six volumes to describe *Weird Islands*, and because I was able to employ another means of description—*drawing*, which can show immediately people and objects in a way that it would take several pages to describe. Until to-day no one has attempted to combine these two mediums in a precise and absolute manner. This is not a book in which the drawings repeat and *illustrate* what the text has told. Here, the author, when it seemed more suitable for

the story, has described characters and objects by a drawing; reserving writing to convey impressions, sentiments, anger, melancholy, sadness, surprise and joy or the impatience of the people concerned. And thus the adventures and scenes are told by the drawings as much as by the text. Each is the complement of the other. That is the real character of these stories. *Weird Islands* was never conceived without the drawings.

I know that this method would not suit a novel, where the main interest lies in the development of character and incident. But it is as natural as it is amusing in a story where the scenes are constantly changing, and where the interest is found particularly in what the queer people, at every step, meet in the way of unexpected creatures and objects, fabulous islands, conciliating and wicked monsters, and creatures who are comic or poetical. I had to show the ten travellers whose voyage had been recounted to me, to show their costumes, their faces, their weapons, and their musical instruments. And so I drew ten faithful portraits (since psychology was not concerned, nor symbolism, nor allegory, nor philosophy). When one of the people met a strange animal, or the Silent Island, or the Island of Long Women, or cannibals, or the building Cyclops, I have made drawings of these things and these creatures instead of giving a long description of them.

It is a legitimate method. Can we not imagine Æsop telling his fables with drawings as well as

words ; Apuleius tracing on his tablets images of his metamorphoses ; Maundeville recounting his voyages with manuscripts covered with sketches. The interest invoked by such a book is not easily exhausted. It is not necessary to read it again to derive pleasure from it. It is enough to turn the pages ; the images impress themselves on the memory. *Weird Islands* is not, of course, perfect of its kind, perfect that is in comparison with what it might be, with that ideal book which would be like a familiar room, full of souvenirs, curious and strange and tender. Souvenirs and portraits that one could look at and touch at leisure ; souvenirs and portraits that, touched or looked upon, would evoke memories of emotions, pleasures and curiosities ; souvenirs and portraits which each time one saw them would reveal their mystery a little more.

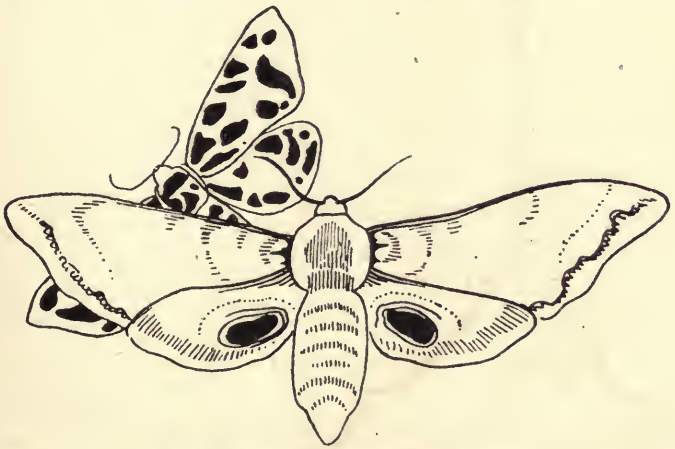


UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

WEIRD ISLANDS

STORY OF THE CARPENTER'S SAW. THE CARPENTER MEETS THE MUSICIANS IN THE PARK. DESCRIPTION OF THE CARPENTER'S COSTUME. PETER WITH THE VOICE OF A FLY. PURCHASE OF A SAW. THE CARPENTER'S BLUE HAT

ONE evening the Carpenter went out to take a walk in the streets of London. He walked in the direction of the Green Park in the hope of finding some moths for his collection. Just as he was approaching the Park railings he saw a little red light, which went out as he looked at it. This interested the Carpenter so much that he at once hurried



SOME MOTHS FOR HIS COLLECTION

through an opening in the railings, and saw, sitting on some chairs and seats under the trees, several most curious looking people.

Though it was a dark evening he could see that one of them was very big and wore a mask; this was Bing. Another had a perfectly white face that looked as though it was covered with flour; he had thick, black eyebrows and a little round patch of red on each cheek; this was Peter. Their costumes were superb, sprinkled with stars and shining patterns so that you could see them easily in the dark.

The Carpenter's costume was very simple. He wore wide yellow trousers and a little black velvet waistcoat over a rose-coloured shirt. He also wore a very high blue hat. He was rather shy at approaching this brilliant group of people, but they all greeted him very kindly, and made him sit down beside them.

"We are discussing the final arrangements for the voyage of the Blue Boat," said Peter, whose voice was very little and thin like the voice of a fly.

"So they are going for a voyage in a Blue Boat," thought the Carpenter to himself. "I think I should like to go with them. I might find some butterflies and moths for my collection."

"What is your instrument?" Peter asked him.

Peter himself carried a yellow oblong box with a long handle joined to it by tightly drawn strings, which sang when you touched them.

"I will bring it when we start," answered the Carpenter politely, having quickly decided to join the young men on their voyage.

A girl young and pretty, who had been standing near by, now came and sat down by the Carpenter. She also was beautifully dressed in radiant colours, and she, too, carried a box, but her's was shaped like

A Girl Young and Pretty

the half of a pear, with a long tail. This box had wires stretched across it, which made agitated little sounds when they were touched. She called it a mandoline. She had also a red leather case, which contained Peter's toilet requisites, white flour, red paint and some charcoal for his eyebrows.

She was very fond of Peter, and liked to see him look nice.

" Don't you think our Peter is very pretty ? " she whispered to the Carpenter. " But don't forget that he's my friend as well as yours."

This made everyone think that the Carpenter was a friend of Peter's, and Peter himself, who was very forgetful, immediately thought so too. So that was all right, and, after some more very pleasant conversation, they joined hands and danced in a ring round the biggest tree for luck. Then they said goodbye to each other, after making an appointment to meet on Greenwich Pier the day after next.

Next day, as soon as the big shops were open, the Carpenter went shopping in a warm brown cloak.

He went into one of the biggest shops and asked for an instrument. They pushed him very politely into a lift, and when he stepped out on the next floor he found himself surrounded by thousands of curious objects made of wood and steel and iron. For instance there were long rounded pieces of wood with a flat piece of iron at one end of them.

" That is a spade, Sir," said the shop assistant, in a very decided voice, as he showed one to the

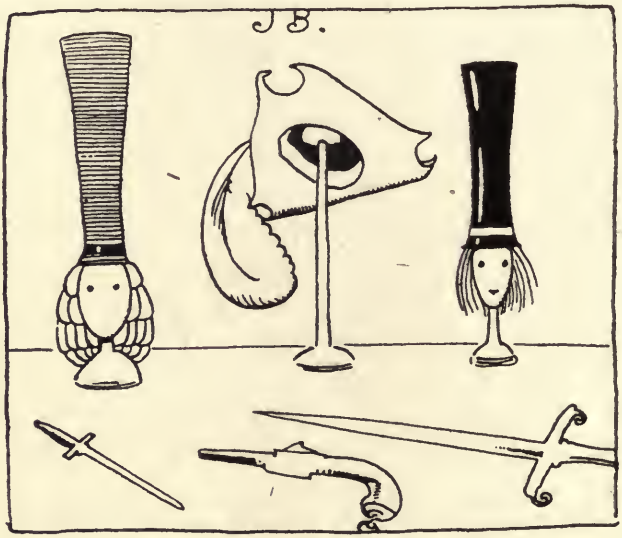
Carpenter. The Carpenter did not like the look of the spades, so he said :

" I will look round for myself, thank you," and

GAVE OUT A GRAVE, CONCENTRATED NOTE

moved away. He walked round and round the department and looked at everything. He had never seen anything like these instruments, and he found

he knew only one kind by name. These were little sharp-pointed things, flattened at one end, and he knew that they were called nails. He had seen them dotted about on people's walls to hang pictures on, but how could one make music with them as Peter did with his yellow box, or Peter's friend with her great pear ? That was the puzzle.



THEATRICAL COSTUME SHOP

As the Carpenter's eye wandered round and round the counters, he discovered a lovely thing, a long thin blade with a lace edge, which, when struck, gave out a grave, concentrated note.

Its clean shining surface fascinated the Carpenter, though he did not know what it was called. He made it ring again and again by tapping it with his fingers.

All this time several shop assistants were watching him, and giggling under their breath at his blue hat and the ends of his yellow trousers, which were all that showed under his big cloak. The Carpenter did not see them. Nothing influenced him except his dreams of butterflies, and now, with the prospect of a voyage before him, these delightful dreams grew and grew so that he saw the world filled with the radiant colours of butterflies' wings.

The reason his hat was so high was because he had bought it at a theatrical costume shop in Long Acre. And it was blue because that was the colour of his favourite butterfly. And what better reason could you have ?

As he did not stop tapping the lace-edged saw to make it sing, an assistant with a malicious eye came up and told him the price of it.

" It is 16s. 6d." he said.

So the Carpenter paid the money at the desk.

THE FOLDING AEROPLANE. THE MEETING AT GREENWICH PIER. A COLLECTION OF INSECTS. THE FOLDING AEROPLANE HAS TWO SEATS. MELINDA TAKES THE CARPENTER'S ARM

THE next day the Carpenter arrived at the pier and found nearly all the other travellers there, already, waiting to start. It was very early so that the departure of the Blue Boat should not be seen by too many people.

They were all dressed in brightly coloured costumes as they had been when the Carpenter first met them, and he saw that each one of them carried an instrument, for they were all musicians. Bing was there, wearing a mask, with his castanets tucked into his belt. He pointed curiously at the saw, and asked :

" Why, what have you got there ? "

The Carpenter did not know what it was called, but he tapped the saw and made it sing. It sounded like a gong, clear and hard.

Everyone looked at Peter and the Friend to see what they thought of it. But these two were busy measuring each other's hands. They had just come to the conclusion that the Friend had a shorter hand than Peter, and that he, curiously enough, had a longer hand than the Friend. They were funny futile people with bird-like brains.

THE FRIEND HAD A SHORTER HAND

The Carpenter stood smiling and making his saw sound like a gong.

" Quite so," said Flute, who was always very wise and solemn, " we can see what that is, but what about your boxes ? Do they contain provisions ? "

" They contain the finest part of my collection," said the Carpenter, proudly.

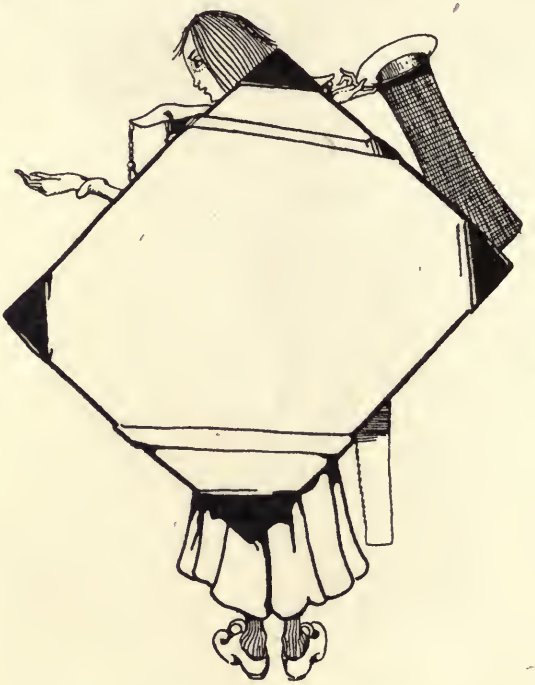
He opened the boxes and they all crowded round, exclaiming in admiration at the round heads and slender hairy legs and rainbow coloured wings of the Carpenter's splendid butterflies.

" Carpenter," said Peter, [this name was given to him then], " what is that great box you have on your

PETER

back, which looks as though you were carrying one of the walls of your house about with you ? "

The Carpenter, quite surprised at the question, answered that it was his folding aeroplane, for he was an expert and original aviator.



IT WAS HIS FOLDING AEROPLANE

At this news the whole party danced for joy. They already possessed a Submarine, called the " Shark," and a dirigible called the " Lemon of Gold," but they had never dreamed of having an aeroplane as well.

Even Flute, although he had acquired a great deal of philosophy while bending over his melancholy

clarionet, looked excited. But the only sign he gave of his pleasure was to nod his head in the eighty-year-old way, though really he was only eighteen and had not even got a moustache !

The Friend advised Melinda, who carried a little drum and lyre in her hands, to make friends with the Carpenter, as she was so fond of clouds. But Melinda was a selfish girl, so she only said to him :

" Is there room in your aeroplane for two people to sit in comfort ? "

" Yes, of course there is," replied the Carpenter, so kindly that Melinda smiled and slipped her hand under his arm, and thought to herself that he was almost as nice as one of his own butterflies.

THE BLUE BOAT AT THE QUAY. THE BOATMAN TIES PLANKS ON HIS FEET. HE FALLS INTO THE WATER. EACH OF THE MUSICIANS PLAYS HIS FAVOURITE PIECE ALL TOGETHER. THE POLICE BOAT IS UPSET. THE MUSICIANS DO NOT HEAR THE SIGNALS. THEY THINK THE VOYAGE IS MAD AND DISORDERLY

AT that moment the Boatman arrived in a great state of terror. He carried a lacquer box under his arm, and wore a leather helmet in case of rain. He had never been so near the water before, and had no idea that it would look so dangerous. But he smiled as bravely as he could and, sitting on a drum, which belonged to one of the travellers, he

began to tie two large wide planks securely on to his feet.

"The sea," he observed, "has a bad habit of rocking. I shall feel much steadier like this, and if I fall in the planks will float."

READ BOOKS ON PRACTICAL NAVIGATION

This thought comforted him a little, and he ventured along the gangway to get into the boat. But the gangway must have been very slippery for quite suddenly he stumbled and fell into the river. The rest of the company rushed forward to

rescue him, but nothing was to be seen except two shining planks on the surface of the water. However, they fished him out at last with the aid of a large crochet hook. He was in a pitiable plight, but secretly he thought that the accident might serve him in good stead, if he could stay in bed for a while and read books on practical navigation.

But, meanwhile the travellers were anxious to be off. They had settled themselves in their places on the boat. Peter sat on the bridge with Melinda and the Friend, the Drummer, the Carpenter, and Bing were on the deck, with Flute, who leaned against the mast to play his clarionet. Sun-and-Moon, who wore a dress covered with the sun, moon and stars, sat on the top of the funnel and played on the bagpipes.

The submarine, called the " Shark," was steered by its owner and captain, who was called Cod because he was dressed in a fish costume. The dirigible, called the Lemon of Gold, which they had brought with them to float over their heads and rescue them in case of accident, had a crew of four men dressed in black and white uniforms, and a captain who never wore a hat so as to have his head clear for giving orders. Everyone was ready to start, and the musicians had begun to tune up their instruments.

They forced the Boatman aboard, and made him hoist the sails. His attempt to do so was so grotesque that the few spectators who were out early enough to see were enchanted with pleasure at the sight. But really there was nothing to laugh about. The

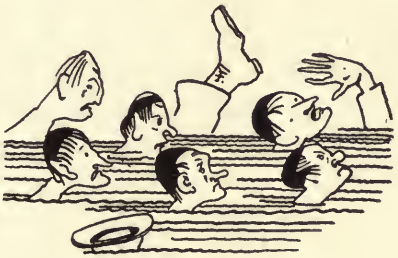
moment the Blue Boat lifted anchor a violent wind caught the sails and sent her speeding on an uncontrolled and dangerous course towards the open sea. The Shark followed like a little fish following a big one, and the Lemon of Gold was tossed hither and thither by the wind.

The musicians, who had not been able to persuade their conductor to accompany them, were all playing different tunes, and the mixture of music was alarming.

A crowd began to gather on the river bank ; most of the people were laughing, but some, more kind-hearted, were much concerned. The Blue Boat was evidently going to be wrecked, and people would be drowned. Some of them hurried away to telephone for the Police, and presently a band of policemen arrived in a motor boat.

But the course of the Blue Boat was so extraordinary that it was dangerous to approach her. First she swerved to the right and then to the left, and then she stopped short and pirouetted round and round and round. The wind laughed wildly at the amusing game it was playing with this boat so nicely painted blue, and carrying such frivolous company. Very soon the Police-boat came too close, and bumped itself so violently against the Blue Boat that it was overturned, and all the policemen fell into the water. Their legs and arms could be seen waving and kicking, and then their heads, looking like little black dots bobbing up and down as they swam towards the shore.

The Blue Boat coursed onward through the water with the speed of an express train, and, as the sea came in sight, she went faster and faster. The musicians were playing all the time, leaning forward with



WAVING AND KICKING

the boat as people do on horseback, heedless of the cries that reached them from all the boats they passed in their mad career. Sirens giving the alarm did not trouble them, nor yet the signals that were made to them, nor the flags that were hoisted to warn them. The people on other boats tried to attract their attention by wireless telegraphy. But what was wireless telegraphy to a Blue Boat flying delightedly through the water at an unheard of speed ?

But presently, as the sea began to stretch wider and wider before the eyes of the voyagers, it became gradually silent and deserted, until at last the Blue Boat was all alone in the midst of the sea, far away from land.

" This is beautiful," said Bing, and stopped waving his castanets as he spoke.

" How I love the sea ! " cried the Friend, shouting

BING

to make her voice heard above the noise of the wind and the music.

" It is a dream," sang Melinda, rattling on her little drum.

" No, it is a cavalry charge," shouted the Drummer, beating his big drum.

" It is the crescendo," said Peter, but his fly-like voice was lost in the wind.

" It is as rapid as Life itself," said Flute in a sad, deep voice through the miserable strains of his favourite funeral march.

" We have wings," cried the Carpenter, fingering his aeroplane.

" We shall go all round the World, only rather too quickly," said Sun-and-Moon, who wrote poetry, and whose favourite instrument was the bagpipes.

Everyone agreed with him that the course of the boat was too rapid ; they called to the Boatman to reduce the speed.

THE BLUE BOAT : THE BLUE BOAT STARTS WITH THE MUSICIANS AND THE BOATMAN ON BOARD. THE BOATMAN HIDES HIMSELF IN A BARREL OF ORANGES. FEARING A STORM, THEY CUT THE RIGGING AND THE SAILS BLOW AWAY. THE CARPENTER LEARNS THE NAME OF THE INSTRUMENT HE HAS BOUGHT

THE Boatman was sitting near the rudder looking extremely unhappy. He opened his lacquer box and examined the instruments it contained, with a puzzled expression. Then he took off his leather helmet, for he was hot with perplexity, and his forehead was covered with big drops of perspiration. There were big drops on his cheeks as well, for he was crying with pity for the people who had embarked on the Blue Boat, and most of all for himself.

LACQUER BOX

The musicians on the Bridge had stopped playing at last. There was no more sound from the flutes or the violins, or even so much as a whisper from the bag-pipes. But the wind and waves grew louder and louder as they tossed and buffeted the Blue Boat and the submarine and the dirigible called the Lemon of Gold.

THE AEROPLANE, THE SUBMARINE,

THE BLUE BOAT AND THE AIRSHIP.

The Boatman's face was sadder than a sparrow's in a shower as he shut the red lacquer box and said :

THE BLUE BOAT

" It seems to me that there is going to be a storm. Look at those clouds like big black buffaloes ! "

" I suppose we shall be wrecked," said the Carpenter, prudently slipping his big saw into the right hand pocket of his yellow trousers.

" Without a doubt," agreed the Drummer, covering up his drum with a large shawl.

" Without any doubt at all, at all," sighed Peter in his little thin voice, thinner than the voice of a fly, and he began to wrap up his violin in his sweater.

All four were as properly depressed as respectable people should be when they are waiting for a storm to come and wreck them.

But the Boatman was not only depressed, he was dreadfully scared, and he had had sufficient experience to know that when people are really scared the best thing for them to do is to hide. So, without saying a word, he went and hid himself very carefully in a barrel of oranges at the bottom of the boat. He emptied out the oranges and crept inside. Then, feeling greatly reassured, he smoked a cigarette, and soon afterwards fell into a peaceful sleep.

THE BOATMAN

Melinda, Bing, Flute, the Friend, and Sun-and-Moon followed his example. They hid themselves.

There were now only

three people left on the Bridge : the Carpenter, the Drummer, and Peter. They were too proud to hide, but their noses grew longer, which was a sign of their uneasiness. Peter, whose nose was quite short in the ordinary way, took it between his finger and thumb and pulled it longer still in his confusion.

" We must anchor the boat," said the Carpenter, who had some common sense, though perhaps not very much. So they lifted up the Blue Boat's anchor and threw it with all their might into the green sea. The boat stopped moving, but the sails flapped and the mast creaked.

" The sails will have to be lowered," said the Carpenter ; the others stared at him in surprise and admiration at his cleverness. " And perhaps the mast will have to be cut down as well," he added. Peter and the Drummer were speechless with admiration.

The knots in the ropes that held up the sails were a recent extraordinary invention of the Boatman's, and no one could unfasten them. So the three took their knives and ran hither and thither among the ropes, cutting the knots one after the other until the largest sail was cut adrift and flew up into the air like a great white gull.

The " Shark " also was in great danger.

The wind blew in violent gusts, sometimes stopping for a few seconds, only to start again more violently than ever. There was still a tiny sail at the very top of the mast, and when the wind beat against it the boat leaned right over the turbulent water, so

that the three voyagers had to cling tightly to the brass rings fastened to the deck to prevent themselves from falling overboard.

" SHARK "

Then there came a memorable scene. As no one was brave enough to climb the mast and release the unfortunate little sail, it was decided to cut the mast down.

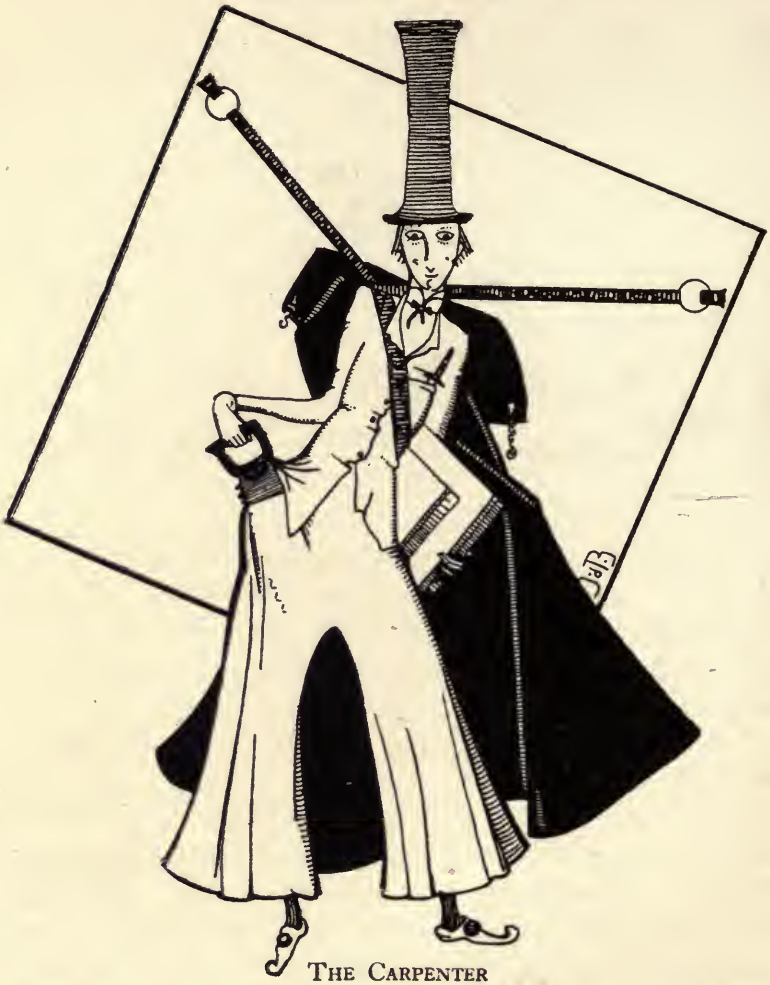
" Give me your saw," said the Drummer to the Carpenter.

" My what ? " said the Carpenter, who did not understand.

" Your saw ! Give it me quick to cut down the mast," said Peter, pulling it out of the Carpenter's pocket. Although he was pleased to know the name of his beautiful new instrument, the Carpenter protested angrily, thinking that they meant to do it some harm.

" My saw ! No, you shan't have it," he cried in great anxiety. But the others took no notice of him and began to saw through the mast.

The Carpenter stamped with despair.



THE CARPENTER

" Oh, my saw, my beautiful saw ! " he cried with tears in his eyes, " they are spoiling my beautiful saw ! "

When the mast was cut right through it flew away with the little sail, not like a sea-gull but like an immense white dragon-fly.

ENGINE TROUBLE. THE AEROPLANE RISES FROM THE BRIDGE OF THE BLUE BOAT. THE FAREWELLS. FLUTE LOOKS AT THE REFLECTION OF THE AEROPLANE IN HIS LITTLE MIRROR. THE CARPENTER'S SAW HANGS FROM THE AEROPLANE. THE SUBMARINE IS UNABLE TO CLOSE

WHILE they were watching the mast flying away with the little sail, Bing came running up to say that the Lemon of Gold had disappeared. It must have got into difficulties with the wind and been swept away, perhaps wrecked.

" Now there is no one to rescue us and we shall be drowned," said Flute dolefully. But none of the others were really troubled.

" I expect they have gone off to have some adventures on their own," said Peter placidly.

" I'm sorry they've gone though," said Flute dreamily. " It was nice to watch the Lemon of Gold winding its way in and out of the clouds."

So there was the adventurous Blue Boat stranded in the middle of the stormy sea, without mast or sails or even a captain to steer it, and only Cod's submarine left to keep it company.

" We ought to have brought a motor boat in case of emergencies, as I suggested," complained Flute.

" Motor boats smell horrid, and besides they are not romantic," said Peter.

" That doesn't matter so long as they are useful,"

said Flute. But Peter took no notice. He only lifted his black eyebrows and bunched up his mouth into a round O, as he caressed it with the bow of his violin.

MELINDA

The Friend began to part his thick hair with an ivory comb which she took out of her leather case.

" Flute is quite right," pouted Melinda. " A motor boat would have saved us from the danger we are in."

" We might make one," suggested the Drummer, twisting his moustaches into corkscrews as he spoke. " We could take the motor from the Carpenter's aeroplane."

" Never ! " said the Carpenter. His saw was safe back in his pocket, but he was quite determined that no one should be allowed to borrow any of his possessions again.

They began to feel hungry, and as they could never think of more than one thing at a time, they forgot their danger and brought out some peppermints and chocolate biscuits for lunch. They regretted that the Lemon of Gold should have disappeared just when it was so lovely to watch, winding its way among the clouds. And indeed the dirigible had vanished with its elegant crew of four men in black and white uniforms, and its Captain, hatless, so as to have his head freer for giving orders. But the Lemon of Gold was to be seen again, and later you will read the authentic account of its reappearance. The look of the bridge cleared of all incumbrances gave Melinda a wonderful idea : " Dear Carpenter," she said, " do let us go on a scouting expedition in your aeroplane

ITS CAPTAIN, HATLESS

and see if we can discover land or some other boat to rescue us. The deck is clear enough to fly off from."

"There's no need of that," said the Carpenter proudly. "My aeroplane can rise from anything, a narrow roof, a mantelpiece, or even the point of a needle, if it could hold itself there a single instant." He brought the aeroplane out of its box and unfolded it. Fortunately the writer of this book possesses a drawing of the aeroplane, so there is no need to describe it in detail. It is only necessary to tell you that the pair of wings that you see at the sides of the little boat turn on their own axle, and when the pilot sets these wings in motion the machine mounts perpendicularly like a balloon or a lift.

The travellers were lost in admiration. The aeroplane was painted with the colours of butterflies wings, and its shape was that of a lovely insect.

"It is alive!" said Bing, drawing back a little. The machine began to vibrate as though it was humming a tune to itself. Several of the travellers withdrew into their cabins with anxious expressions. But Melinda was not in the least frightened.

"It is lovely!" she said. "Dear Carpenter, let us go at once." As she spoke she climbed into the second seat of the aeroplane, and began to play softly on her silver-stringed lyre.

Seeing that the aeroplane was quite harmless, everyone came on deck again, and Cod, watching from his Submarine, wished that he had brought an aeroplane instead.

The Carpenter would not leave without his collection of butterflies and his saw, which he fastened to

Cod

his belt by a cord so that he would know at once if anyone tried to steal it. Melinda took with her her

lyre, her little drum, and a looking-glass, for she was extremely vain.

Everyone helped to load the aeroplane with provisions : two boxes of chocolate biscuits, two buns, a few shrimps, a tomato, and some cherries, two bottles of fresh water, and one of cider. Then the Carpenter made the wings of the aeroplane turn with terrific rapidity, and, after a touching farewell, allowed it to rise up into the air like a pretty basket of flowers being drawn up to Heaven by a string.

Sun-and-Moon recited a poem of farewell, and Bing stood bowing stiffly like a marionette, the Drummer beat out a doleful song on his drum, the Friend waved her pocket handkerchief, while Peter shouted encouragement to the voyagers, though his voice was much too tiny to carry so far.

Flute stood apart and predicted disaster. At the same time he pretended to be quite indifferent ; so he stood with his back to the rest as though he was not watching the flight of the aeroplane. But as a matter of fact he could see all that was happening behind him, by looking in a hand glass which he wore on a cord hung round his neck. He always used this glass when he was very curious, and wanted to pretend that he did not care for anything except philosophy.

LOOKING IN A HAND GLASS

When the machine was fairly high up in the air the front propeller began to turn, and the aeroplane set off in an oblique line. Then the side wings stopped turning. The course became horizontal, and the aeroplane began to circle round the boat in circles that grew larger and larger.

" What is that bright spot that follows the aeroplane wherever it goes ? " the Friend asked Peter. But Peter was feeling rather upset by the wind, so he only said, without looking :

" I see nothing."

The Friend made a face at him and asked the Drummer, who said :

" It is the Carpenter's saw shining against the black clouds."

" It is a good thing it is tied to a cord or it would be lost," said Flute, shaking his head wisely.

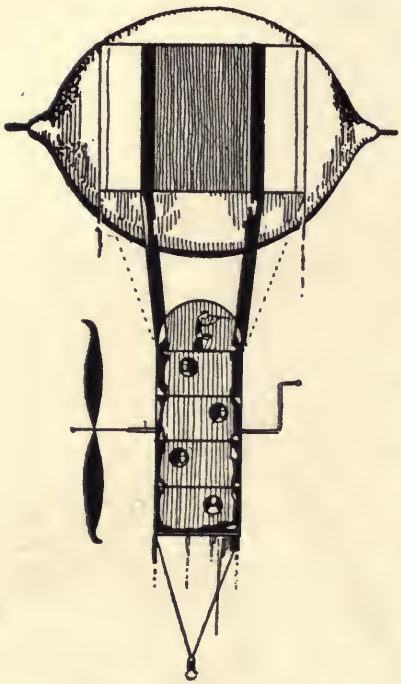
" Perhaps he will think one of us has stolen it from him," said Peter remorsefully.

" Oh, no, he will feel it hanging from his pocket,"

DRUMMER

said the Friend consolingly, kissing him on the tip of his nose.

The aeroplane was gradually disappearing from view. Even Cod, who had been following its flight in his submarine, had to return at last to the Blue Boat. He did not dare to go very far away, because he had no provisions except a box of preserved fruit, which he was unable to open.



THE LEMON OF GOLD

He had no initiative, but he floated very prettily on the water in his submarine, though he could not make it dive as he had forgotten to bring the cover that kept the water out.

And now, reader, I am puzzled to know what to tell you next. The Lemon of Gold is lost and wandering somewhere in the sky, the Blue Boat is stranded in an unknown part of the ocean, Melinda and the Carpenter have just disappeared in an aeroplane. I know the story of all their separate adventures, but which am I to tell you first ?

I think perhaps it had better be the story of what Melinda and the Carpenter discovered.

THE CARPENTER AND MELINDA. WHAT THE CARPENTER AND MELINDA SAW. THEY SEE A LITTLE GREEN ISLAND. MELINDA COAXES THE CARPENTER BY THE PROMISE OF MARVELLOUS INSECTS. BUT PERHAPS THERE ARE SAVAGE BEASTS. THE CARPENTER FISHES UP A COCK OF GILDED WOOD WITH HIS SAW. THEY DISCOVER A FIRE ON THE SEA. THE COCK FALLS INTO THE SEA OR ON AN ISLAND. MELINDA AND THE CARPENTER SULK. THE AEROPLANE LANDS ON SOME PALM TREES IN A PERFUMED ISLAND. THE SINGING BIRDS

MELINDA was delighted when the Blue Boat disappeared from view, and they were alone in the vast sky.

" This is a real voyage," she said.

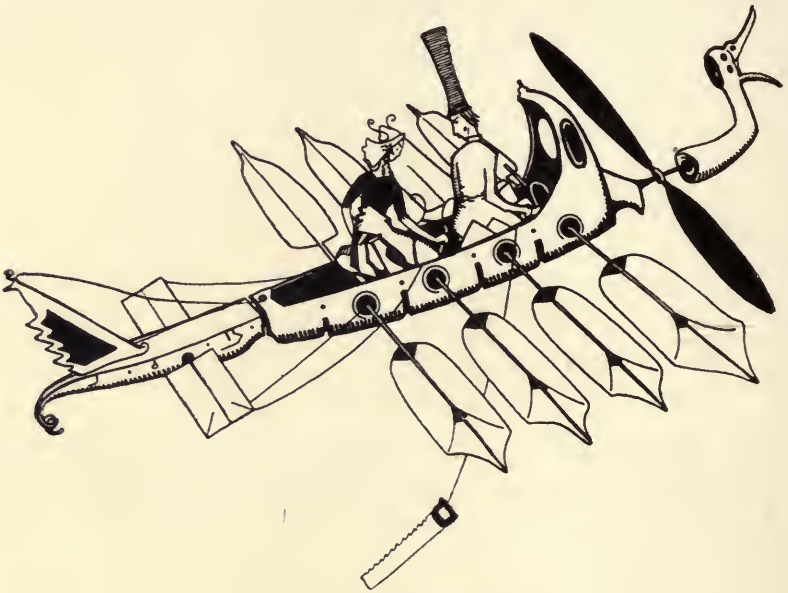
" No," said the Carpenter in the serious tones of a real explorer, " this is a scouting expedition, nothing more."

" But we have provisions on board," said Melinda ; " the Blue Boat is at anchor and cannot move away. Why should it only be a scouting expedition ? "

" Because if we are away too long our friends on the Blue Boat may get hungry and thirsty. Then we should be conscience-stricken."

" They have cakes and chocolates and plenty of mixed sweets." The Carpenter took off his hat,

folded it up, and sat upon it. Bareheaded he looked even more honest and sincere than usual, and when he said " I promise you a real voyage later on," Melinda knew that he would keep his promise.



" This is a Real Voyage "

" Oh, very well," she said, " but you might at least slow down so that we can see the surrounding country." The Carpenter looked at her with a frightened expression, thinking that she must have gone suddenly crazy, and wondering if her's was a dangerous case or simply sad.

" There is no surrounding country," he said gently. " We are in the midst of a sea appallingly desolate."

Melinda put her hand on his shoulder and pointed downwards.

" Look there ! " she said.

The Carpenter looked down, and saw in the middle of the desolate ocean a round green spot no bigger than a grain of dust in a sunbeam.

" That must be a wonderful place, judging by its shape," she said, searching her mind for arguments to persuade the Carpenter to descend. But the Carpenter wanted to go back at once to the Blue Boat to tell their friends what he and Melinda had discovered. By straining their eyes they could see several more round green spots not far from the first. They evidently formed a group of islands.

" Dear Carpenter, let us go down a little closer, so that we can see what sort of islands they are," pleaded Melinda. The Carpenter consented to descend a little, and Melinda grew more and more excited.

" Oh, look ! " she cried, " I am sure I can see tall trees. They are really marvellous islands."

" We will guide the Blue Boat this way," replied the Carpenter, beginning to turn the aeroplane. " I only hope we shall be able to find it again safely."

" Some of the trees are as yellow as gold, and some are as green as apples ! "

" Look There ! "

"We will visit them with our friends," said the Carpenter, and turned the aeroplane completely round.

"No doubt they are swarming with insects."

The front propeller of the aeroplane stopped abruptly.

"There are sure to be rare and beautiful butterflies."

The aeroplane turned right round again and descended with the downward flight of a swan. Melinda smiled to herself at her victory.

The islands grew larger every minute. The largest was circular in shape and the coast line was girdled with palm trees growing together so thickly that their branches interlaced and made a green covering which hid whatever might have been living on the earth below.

INSECTS

" Oh, yes," repeated Melinda, " there are certain to be lovely insects." And then she added as another thought occurred to her, " and perhaps wild beasts and fierce men as well ! "

LOVELY INSECTS

The Carpenter turned sharply in his seat with a startled face. He had never for a moment supposed that there might be wild beasts or fierce men on the islands they were about to visit. He was so upset at the sudden thought that he would have to protect Melinda from all these dangers that he left the aeroplane to take care of itself, and it took a wild plunge towards the earth without his being aware of it, shaving in its flight a tall steeple which had a golden cock on the top of it. The Carpenter's saw, which all this time had been hanging below the aeroplane, struck against the steeple and fixed itself into the cock like a knife in a loaf of bread. The aeroplane rebounded so violently at the shock that it rose into the air again at a giddy speed, and the cock was torn away from the steeple and remained hanging on the saw. It was made of gilded wood and very heavy, so that it pulled at the cord attached to the Carpenter's belt. He discovered his miraculous catch and showed

HIS MIRACULOUS CATCH

it to Melinda, and they were both so exultant that they forgot their fright at the erratic behaviour of the aeroplane. The Carpenter began to pull the cord up very carefully in case the cock should fall off. But at this critical moment in his life, as he was about to draw a golden cock out of the air like a fish, Melinda interrupted him by pulling at his arm and directing his attention towards a red and purple flame that was glowing brightly out at sea. The Carpenter looked at it in astonishment, and Melinda could see a reflection of the flame in each of his round eyes, in each eye a little picture of a fire.

"What can that fire be and where is it burning?" she said.

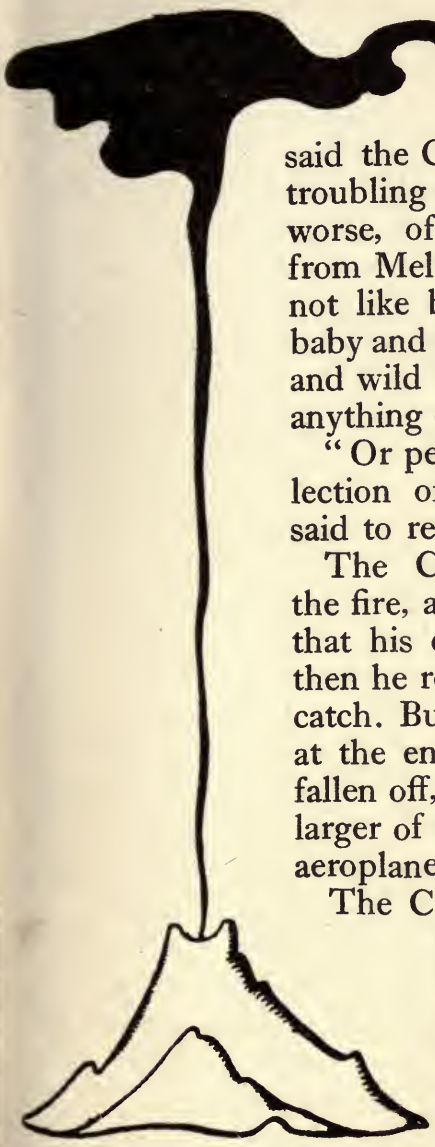
"I do not know what sea this is, so I cannot tell you what land it can be where that fire is burning," replied the Carpenter.

"But perhaps it isn't a fire, perhaps it is a conflagration."

"That's it perhaps," said the Carpenter.

"Or it might be it is not on land at all, it might be a boat burning, or it might even be a volcano in eruption!" said Melinda in a frightened voice.

"Or it might be just a gentleman burning some



Volcano in Eruption

old letters, or a baker opening his oven," said the Carpenter, trying to chase the troubling idea of a conflagration, or still worse, of a red and purple volcano, from Melinda's mind. But Melinda did not like being treated as if she was a baby and likely to be frightened of giants and wild beasts or volcanos or fires, or anything else for the matter of that.

"Or perhaps it is only a useless collection of insects being burned," she said to revenge herself.

The Carpenter stopped looking at the fire, and turned round to make sure that his collection was still safe. And then he remembered his wonderful new catch. But alas, there was nothing now at the end of the cord. The cock had fallen off, either into the sea or into the larger of the two islands over which the aeroplane was now hovering.

The Carpenter grew pink with vexation. He would have cried, but he knew that Melinda was such a tease she would never stop laughing at him.

Melinda herself was sulking.

PINK WITH VEXATION

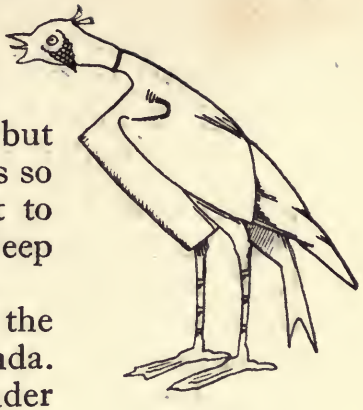
The Carpenter decided to sulk, too, for at least as long as she did. So for the next five minutes they sulked, looking at each other every few seconds to see if a smile were possible. But both their faces remained grave, and five minutes seemed a very much longer time than usual. They were both perplexed; they wanted to stop sulking, but they were too proud. Meanwhile the aeroplane, left to itself, drifted gently over one of the islands until it reposed delicately on the tops of the palm trees.

It was like a dream to sit on the topmost branches of a forest, where the green branches stretched away on either side as far as the eye could see, and hundreds of hidden birds were singing at the close of day. It was now dusk, and the sky, where it touched the sea, was swept with pale colours, rose and green, primrose and violet. Melinda leant towards the Carpenter, and they kissed each other and forgot their sulking.

MELINDA HERSELF WAS SULKING

The air was filled with the scent of flowers and vanilla trees. Melinda and the Carpenter felt as though they were in Paradise. The sweet voices of the birds gave them a feeling

of safety, nevertheless they spoke in low voices, partly for fear that there might be less kindly creatures hidden beneath the trees, but still more because everything was so beautiful that they did not want to talk loudly. The sky was now a deep violet and night was falling fast.



SINGING

"We cannot venture under the trees before day," said Melinda. "There are sometimes serpents under trees on islands."

They both shuddered.

"There will be plenty of time to-morrow. We had better dine now," said the Carpenter.

So they had supper. It was a charming meal, small, dainty, and varied. They drank cider to make them sleep. For cider is a very strong drink. But there are few people so unpoetic as to be able to sleep on a bed of tree tops, when the birds that have sung all day give place to the birds of night, still more lovely and mysterious.

SERPENTS

THE CONCERT: A MUSIC LESSON. A WORLD OF BIRDS. THE BIG PELICAN AND THE PEACOCK. THE BIRDS WITHOUT HATS OR ARMS.

SO as they did not want to sleep, Melinda gave the Carpenter his first music lesson, and he accompanied the pieces she played on her lyre by taps on his saw. The silver strings of the lyre trembled under Melinda's fingers like roses when a warm breeze is passing, and every now and then the Carpenter struck his saw like a gong.

Suddenly the foliage of the palm tree stirred as though a wind had swept it, and the branches bent under the weight of thousands of splendid birds, who had stopped their own singing and come to listen to the music of the lyre and gong.

More birds came every minute. They rose to the tree tops like bubbles rising to the surface of the water, until it was no longer a forest of palm trees, but a forest of birds, a thousand shapes and colours. Every beak was turned towards the musicians as they listened, and their delight knew no bounds.

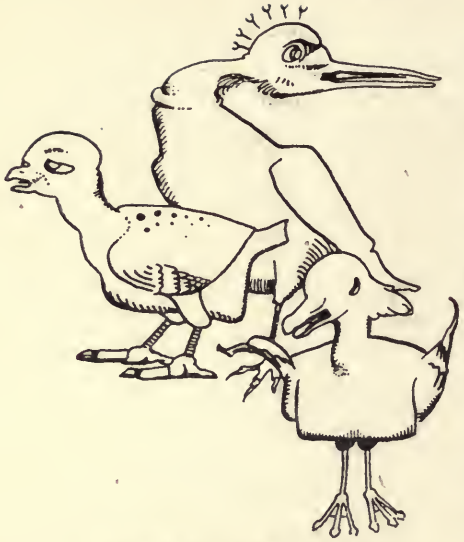
Melinda and the Carpenter were somewhat distracted by their radiant audience. They went on playing, however, and tried to remember as they played what was the correct behaviour for a young lady and gentleman sitting in an aeroplane on the crest of a forest and suddenly surrounded by birds come to listen to their music.

They need not have troubled themselves for there

was no ceremony. As soon as the concert was over the birds disappeared very quickly, as though fearing to be questioned. But, of course, they did not go

His first Music Lesson

until they had applauded the music, with their beaks as they had no hands. Their applause sounded like thousands of hailstones falling on a glass roof. Then they vanished, and the murmur of the sea was the only sound that could be heard.



THEY APPLAUDED THE MUSIC

At last Melinda said in a low voice : " This must be the Island of Birds."

" And it seems as though there are only birds living here," said the Carpenter in a tone of relief. " Birds," he added, " are well known to naturalists as perfectly harmless creatures."

" I should like their opinion on my music," said Melinda dreamily. The Carpenter could not help thinking that it had been partly his music, but he remembered how depressing it had been to sulk and decided to be amiable.

" Shall I ask that big Pelican, whose head was almost human. He was extremely enthusiastic by the look of him," he suggested gently.

" The peacock looked more intelligent," said Melinda.

" But surely peacocks are not very musical ? "

" Oh, Carpenter, you did not see how he admired me ! " said Melinda.

" I will question the peacock," said the Carpenter, " and ask him if he does not think you are the prettiest of all the pretty girls in the world."

" But suppose he has never seen any other girls ? " said Melinda a little anxiously.

" He will say you are as beautiful as a peacock," said the Carpenter.

BIG PELICAN, WHOSE HEAD WAS ALMOST HUMAN

Melinda looked at him attentively, but the Carpenter turned his face away so that it was hidden by the shadow of the leaves.

" But how do you know that the birds can speak at all ? " she said, fearing that perhaps she would never know the peacock's opinion.

The Carpenter came near to her and whispered: "Quite close to me just now I saw a bird with great round eyes and a crest say to another with a long neck. 'She is like Tuta.' He said nothing more and his tone was indifferent, and the other replied in the same uninterested voice: 'He is like Tuty.'"

ANOTHER WITH A LONG NECK

"There's no doubt they can speak then," said Melinda. "So you can ask the peacock whether he admires me. But it's a pity they have no hands."

"That's quite natural," said the Carpenter.

"I dare say, but how can they say, 'how do you do?' if they can't shake hands," said Melinda, defying the Carpenter to answer the question.

"They have no hats," replied the Carpenter simply.

ZOOLOGY OF THE PARROT : THE PARROT FIEND GETS ANGRY. HE PROVES THAT HE IS NOT A BIRD. HE DIVIDES ALL LIVING BEINGS INTO TWO CLASSES. THEY HEAR ABOUT TUTY AND TUTA.

"WELL, anyway, we are going to make the acquaintance of birds who can talk," said Melinda. " But why have they all gone away ? " Suddenly close beside her she heard a very unamiable laugh. Then a voice said :

" You won't hear them talk, vain young woman ; they will not come near you." It was not a loud voice, but it was very hard and arrogant. It reminded the Carpenter of the harsh noise the saw had made when it cut off the mast of the Blue Boat. He was nearly as frightened as Melinda, and they held hands tight to reassure each other.

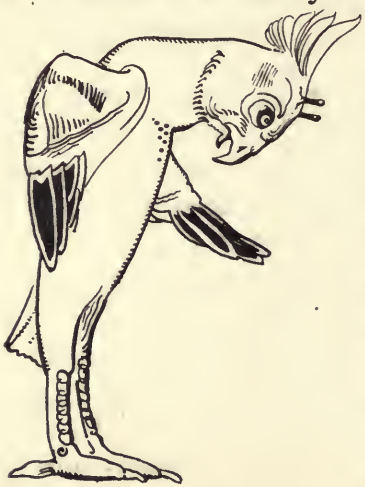
" I expect it is only a tiny animal," said the Carpenter under his breath.

" It is you who are the animal," said the voice angrily. They held their breath and did not stir. The moon rose above the tree tops at that moment, touching the leaves with silver, and lighting up the pictures of butterflies on the aeroplane.

" So these animals like insects," said the saw-like voice again. The Carpenter's hand held Melinda's a little tighter. They neither of them said a word, but they were both thinking: " Perhaps it is a serpent," and their hearts beat loudly.

But presently, as the moonlight grew stronger,

they saw that it was not a serpent but a parrot with black and white feathers and two little black horns. He looked less frightening than his voice, but his wicked little black eyes were full of malice.



THE PARROT FIEND

"I came to give you some advice," said the Parrot Fiend, for it was he.

"Why, Melinda, he speaks quite well."

"Well, you can speak, can't you," said the Parrot Fiend, "You speak a good deal too loud. Speak lower. That's my first advice to you."

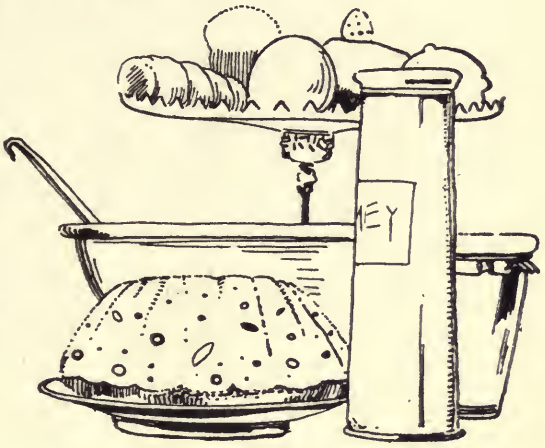
"I am afraid you are not a truthful bird." said Melinda mockingly. "You said that I should not hear birds speak, and you are speaking to us yourself." Her fears had left her when she saw that the parrot was quite small, and she was too frivolous to see that this was a serious situation. "You're a nice fraud to come giving people advice!"

"Sir!" said the Parrot, with surprising and dignified politeness, "will you please beg this lady not to insult me."

Melinda burst out laughing, and the Carpenter, very much embarrassed, began to fidget with his hat, first taking it off and then putting it on and then taking it off again and rolling it about in his hands.

The Parrot Fiend did not wait for him to say anything, but went on.

"In the first place I am not an ordinary Parrot, and in the second, no one in his senses would confuse parrots with birds. Birds are animals like horses, monkeys, tortoises and men."



ALL KINDS OF JUMBLES

"Then where do you class the insects?" said Melinda, much amused at the Parrot's grating voice, which, as he grew more and more angry, became as shrill as the high notes of an organ. "Do you count them as animals or as parrots?"

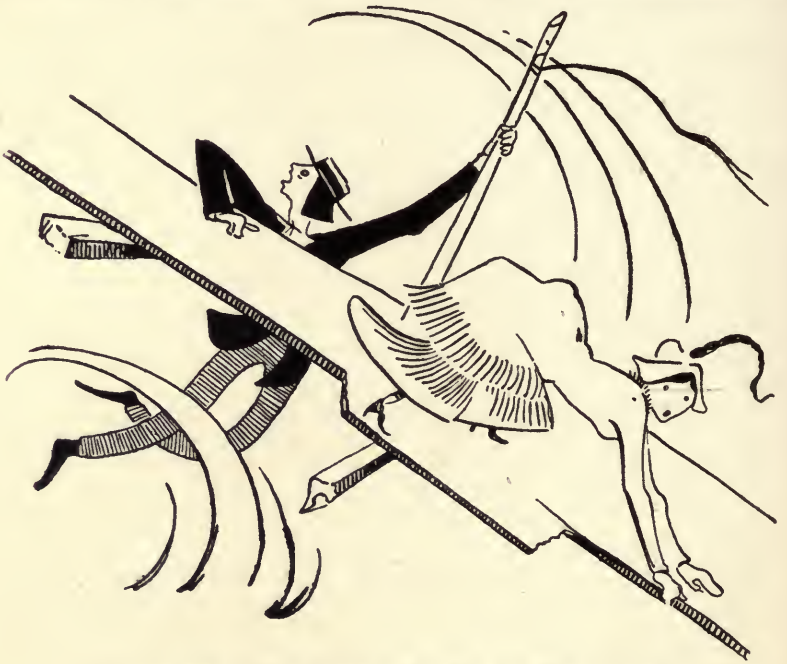
"As animals," replied the Parrot Fiend more politely, for he liked the serious turn the conversation seemed to be taking.

"For my part," said the Carpenter, "I don't agree with you at all."

"You must classify infallibly," began the Parrot, but Melinda interrupted him. "What does that mean?" she asked.

"It means that you must classify as I do of course." said the Parrot irritably. "There is only one really reliable, natural and scientific way," he went on. "Creatures must be divided into two groups, the superior, that is to say parrots, who eat pure grain,

uncrushed with all the aroma of creation in it, and the inferior, composed of animals who eat all sorts of food that has been ground, handled and mixed, with every artificial device, like the cakes made by



TUTA AND TUTY WERE WRECKED ON THE ISLAND

Tuta and the bread made by Tuty, all kinds of jumbles, such as puddings, blancmange, jam and clarified honey."

"But the lovely insects nourish themselves on flowers," said the Carpenter.

"The inferior or animal class," continued the Parrot severely, "is divided again into two, Large

and Small. It is quite unnecessary to trouble about the smaller kind, they are so soon eaten up themselves by the birds and other animals. And that is exactly what I am complaining about!" shouted the Parrot Fiend, suddenly forgetting his zoological discourse. "Since those two animals, Tuta and Tuty were wrecked on the Island. . . ."

"What sort of animals, large or small?" interrupted Melinda eagerly.

"Large, like you," said the Parrot Fiend, and went on. "Since they have come here everything has gone wrong. They make all kinds of dishes of sugar and flour for the birds, who have grown so lazy that they won't give themselves the trouble to catch insects. The Round Island. . . ."

"The Round Island," whispered the Carpenter to Melinda. "Make a note of that."

THE PARROT'S ADVICE. THE ROUND ISLAND OR THE ISLAND OF THE CUBIC BIRDS. THE CRUEL BALIGOORS AND COOMASIS. THE CARPENTER AND MELINDA LEARN OF THE EXISTENCE OF THE BLACK CAVALIER. THE MAGIC DIAMOND.

"THE Round Island," continued the Parrot, glaring at the interruption, is full of noisy and voracious insects. Every day, owing to the indolence of the birds, there are more of them. In the afternoon, just when the Parrots want to sleep,

they wake up and dance in the heat of the sun, making such an insupportable din that sleep becomes impossible. At all other times of the day the birds gossip so loudly that I am obliged to take my family away to a secret cave to be able to speak of serious things at all. In the forest one cannot hear himself speak."

"So you don't like the birds?" said Melinda.

"They prevent me from sleeping," said the Parrot.

"And you don't like the insects," said the Carpenter.

"*They* prevent me from sleeping," said the Parrot, while two little flames of anger shone at the end of his horns.

"Then why do you stay on this island?"

"It's my island," said the Parrot crossly. "The others are only intruders."

"You might emigrate to the other island that I have seen quite close to this one."

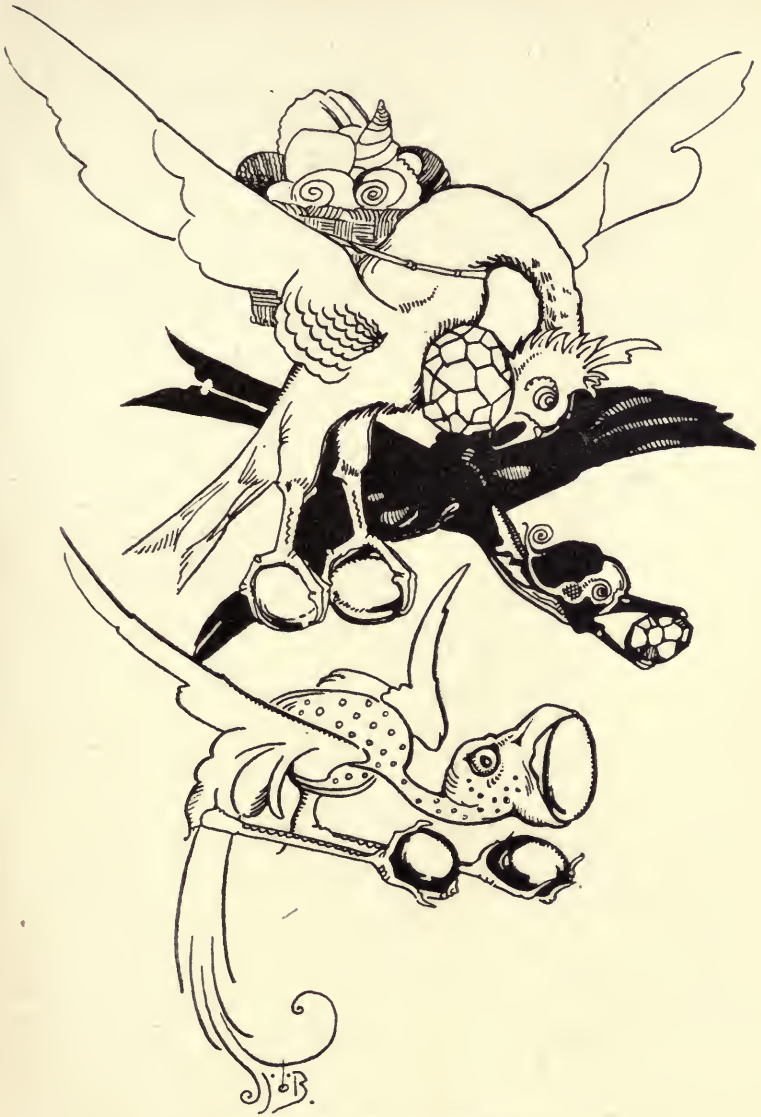
TWO LITTLE FLAMES OF ANGER

The Parrot sidled away along the branch and appeared terrified.

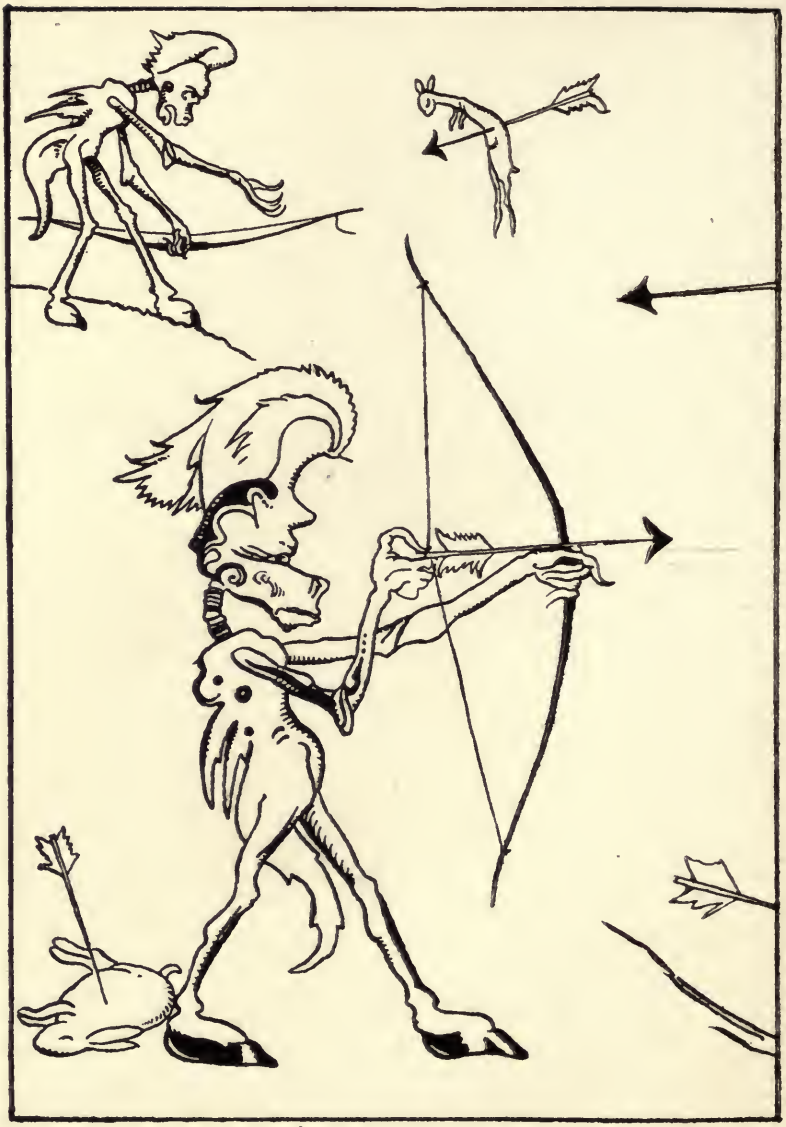
"The Island of the Baligoors and Coomasis!" he gasped.

"What sort of island is that?" asked Melinda and the Carpenter, both together.

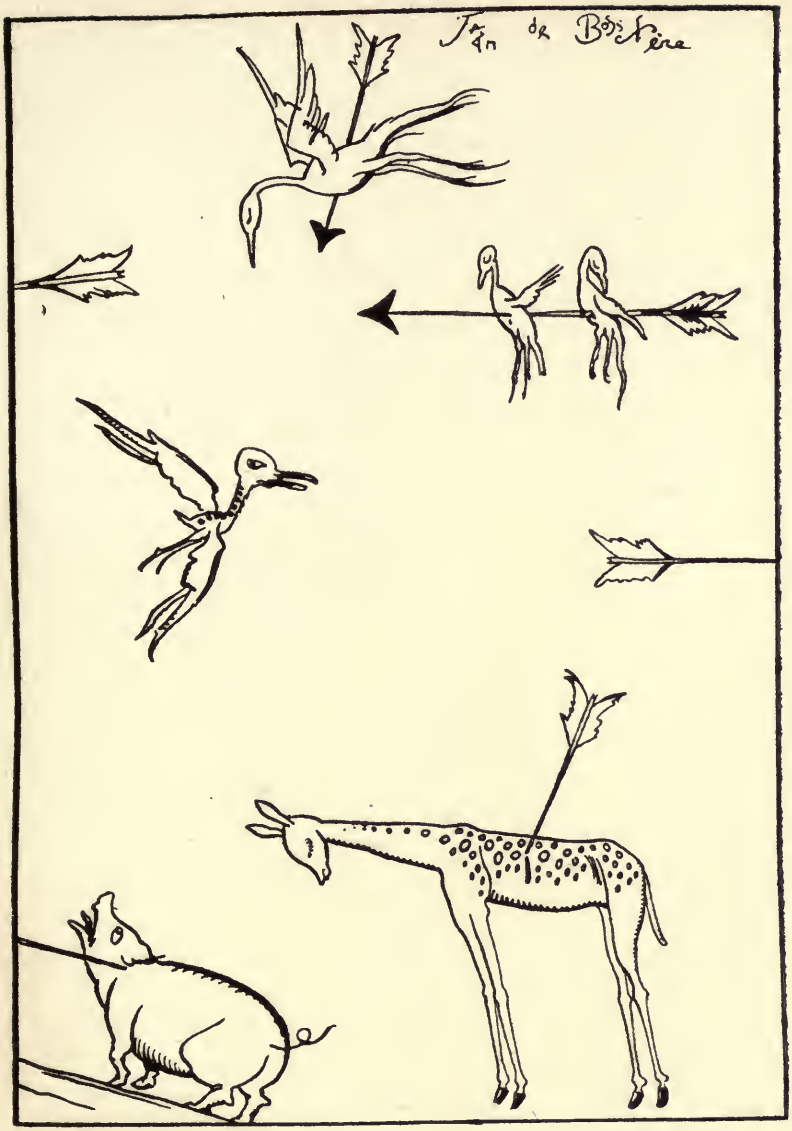
"The Island of the Baligoors and the Coomasis!" repeated the Parrot, forgetting all his arrogance in his terror. "The Baligoors and Coomasis strangle,



To throw Stones at them



THE ARROWS RETURN TO THEIR



OWNERS WITH THEIR PREY

hang, and behead everything that is not Baligoor or Coomasi ! "

" Do they ever come over here ? " inquired the Carpenter in some alarm.

" Oh, no, they cannot fly," said the Parrot with more confidence.

" But have they no boats ? " said the Carpenter, feeling far from reassured, and beginning to examine the propeller of his aeroplane.

The Parrot ignored the mention of boats, as he did not know what they were.

" But mightn't they swim across to this island ? " persisted the Carpenter.

" Their paws are too short," returned the Parrot quite gaily. " Sometimes," he went on, " the birds fly over their island to throw stones at them, ruby stones, emerald stones, little gold nuggets and other dust. But they take care to fly very high because the Baligoors have murderous bows and arrows, and the arrows return to their owners with their prey if they so much as touch it, and even if they miss return just the same so that they can be used again next time."

" Alas, poor Parrot ! " said Melinda, quite touched. " Then you are condemned to live here always."

" Oh, yes," said the Parrot, " but I should not mind if only someone would take away Tuta and Tuty, who prevent the birds from doing their duty and catching the insects. Perhaps that machine of yours might carry four persons ? " he added, with a sly look.

"Is that the advice you came to give us, charming Parrot?" asked the Carpenter.

"No, that was just a little counsel by the way," said the Parrot. I came to warn you of the Black Cavalier, who haunts this island. The birds think that it was sent by the Golden God that they worship, but personally I think it must be something to do with those Baligoors." Here the Parrot scowled. "Anyhow, it is very dangerous, and will probably attack you suddenly, and attempt to kill you. In any case it won't allow you to take away Tuta and Tuty, or even see them if it can help it."

"Can it hear us now, do you think?" asked Melinda in a frightened whisper.

"Possibly," replied the Parrot, "but it wouldn't be able to understand you if it did."

"Is it big?" asked Melinda again.

"I don't know."

"Then you have never seen it?" said the Carpenter.

"No," said the Parrot humbly, "because when it begins to purr all the birds, and even the parrots, hide themselves and shut their eyes."

SHUT THEIR EYES

"It purrs, then?" said the Carpenter.

"Oh, yes, indeed, louder even than that insect of yours," said the Parrot, pointing to the aeroplane.

It was nearly dawn. The moon had vanished and faint streaks of light were appearing in the east.

"I must be going," said the Parrot Fiend, condescendingly. "Your conversation has been more or less interesting, and I have quite enjoyed our little chat. I shall be grateful if you will remove Tuta and Tuty, and in return I will give you this magic diamond. You can discover its uses for yourselves. Farewell, and beware of the Black Cavalier!" So saying, the Parrot Fiend disappeared among the leaves.

THE BLACK CAVALIER: MELINDA AND THE CARPENTER EXPLORE THE ISLAND. THE CARPENTER DISCOVERS AN INSECT. MELINDA PLUCKS SOME FRUIT, BUT IS PREVENTED BY THE BIRDS. THE CARPENTER WISHES TO SAW OFF THE HORSE'S HOOFS. HE DECIDES TO ATTACK THE BLACK CAVALIER BY AIR.

IT was day. The sea was lightly veiled in rose and golden mists. The dew made the leaves of the palm tree look as though they were made of silver. The dew had silvered the aeroplane as well, and the Carpenter wiped it with a large silk handkerchief, and then folded it up and put it back into its box so that no harm should come to it while they

explored the island. Melinda had climbed into the centre of the tree while he was doing this, and was startled by a sudden cry. She turned round to see what was the matter, and saw the Carpenter standing on a branch just above her, holding in his hand a small box at which he was staring in speechless amazement.

" What have you found ? " asked Melinda curiously.

" I haven't found anything," gasped the Carpenter, " but I don't know what has happened to my aeroplane ! " He held up the funny little box as he spoke. " This is all there is left ! " His voice was so full of tears that he could hardly speak. " I just touched it by accident with that diamond the Parrot gave us, and it shrank and shrank and shrank and now we shall never be able to get away from this island, for who could sit in an aeroplane that size, much less make it fly ? "

They both burst into tears of despair.

" Oh, that horrible Parrot," sobbed Melinda ; " I knew he meant us some harm." In her rage she picked up the diamond meaning to throw it far away into the depths of the forest, but it somehow slipped out of her hand and fell on to the tiny box which the Carpenter had laid on one of the leaves of the palm tree. Instantly the box began to grow. It grew and grew and grew, until it was exactly the same size as it had been before, and then it stopped. Melinda and the Carpenter stared at one another with round eyes.

" I'm sorry I said the Parrot Fiend was horrible," said Melinda remorsefully.

" He has given us a wonderful present," said the Carpenter. " Now I need never carry my aeroplane about on my back. I can always make it small enough to put in my pocket." He made the aeroplane small again as he spoke, and slipped it into his pocket.

INTO THE FOREST BELOW

" Let me carry the diamond," said Melinda. " I'll take great care of it." So the Carpenter handed her the diamond, and they packed up the rest of their belongings and clambered down the tree trunk into the forest below. It was like coming into a wide

green palace. The tree trunks were shining green and yellow pillars. One or two birds were walking to and fro, taking an early morning stroll. The travellers kept themselves well hidden, and looked about them with interest.

The birds were mostly cubic in shape, though some were rounder than others. Their feet were like forks, with two prongs. Their heads were more ordinary, but many of them had human noses and mouths instead of beaks. Whatever the Parrot might say, he was much more like an ordinary bird than they were.

But, though very strange, the birds were not, in any way alarming, and their harmless behaviour and the peaceful morning made the travellers feel much more confident.

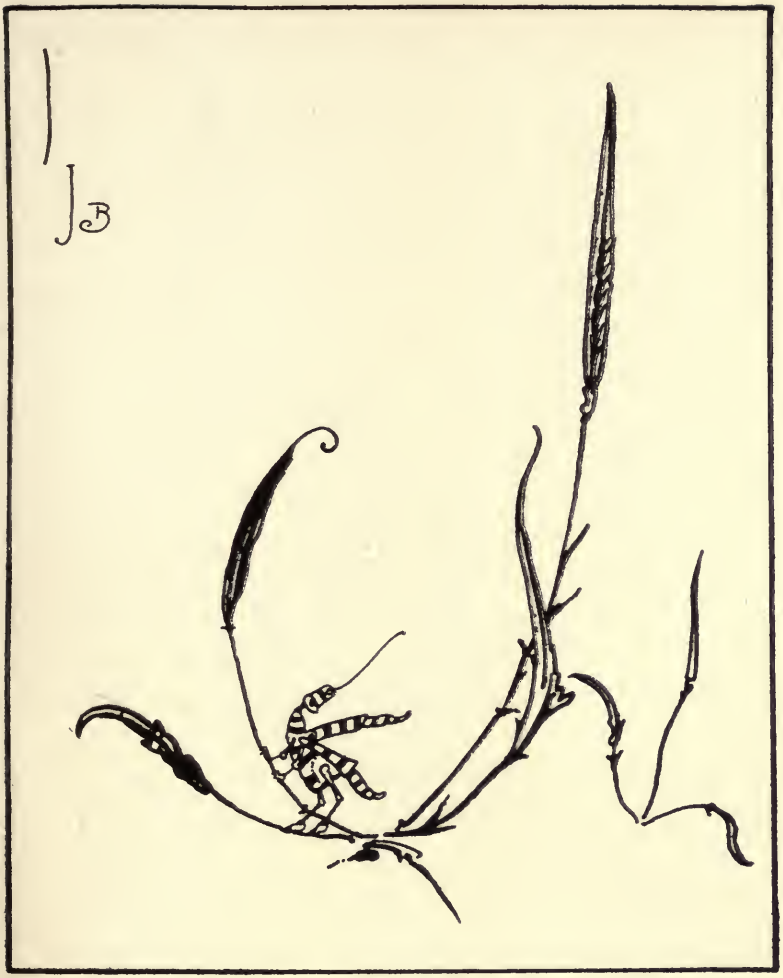
The Carpenter poked about in the soft green moss, which covered the ground, and found that it was swarming with curious insects. A great many were new to him, and one particularly puzzled him. It was very small and black, and not in the least like any insect he had ever seen before. It was amusing itself by running up and down the stems, and over the flowers of a small plant, as though in search of prey.

Melinda watched the Carpenter condescendingly as he bent over his interesting discovery. She did not mind the delay in their journey round the island, as she thought that the capture of a tiny insect could not possibly detain them long. She was sitting close to a tall, slender plant, bearing fine red fruit, which

looked so inviting that she at once started to pick it. But no sooner was her hand stretched out to do so than a bird pounced down on her with a loud cry, and pinched her ear with its beak, and shook her roughly with its wings. Then it let her go, and picked all the fruit and stowed it away in its body, which was a square-shaped box, after which it left her by the bare tree, robbed of its bright fruit, shooting ferocious side glances at her as it went.

PICKED ALL THE FRUIT

"We are discovered!" cried Melinda piteously. But the Carpenter was too much occupied to pay any attention to her. At the very moment, indeed, when the fierce bird had attacked Melinda, the Carpenter's fingers had closed over the little insect he so much desired to capture. At first it felt quite soft under his fingers, but then suddenly it became hard, and he was so much surprised at this that he let it slip away.



It vanished for a moment, and when he caught sight of it again it had become larger. It looked like a little black triangle which had a large white eye with a black pupil. As it ran hither and thither to escape the Carpenter's fingers it grew larger and its appearance became more and more extraordinary.

Its legs had grown longer, and it now appeared to have two heads. Suddenly it stopped running and stung the Carpenter with a kind of spear it was holding, and then ran away again. The Carpenter ran after it in hot pursuit, followed by Melinda, who did not dare to leave him.

The strange creature went on growing and as it grew it became evident that this was the Black Cavalier itself. The Carpenter hesitated, and Melinda tried to hold him back. They stood close together while the Black Cavalier, still growing rapidly, began to purr.

The Carpenter quickly took the diamond from Melinda, and managed to touch the Black Cavalier with it, but the magic was not strong enough to have any effect on so terrible a creature. Already it had grown as high as the Carpenter's blue hat, but the sting did not grow at all and remained quite short.

The Black Cavalier was busy stinging the Carpenter's hat, thinking it to be a live thing, and soon it had to bend down to reach the hat with its short sting, and soon it was too tall to touch the Carpenter at all, and soon it was taller than the tallest of the palm trees, and still it grew.

HIS SAW PASSED THROUGH THE HOOF WITHOUT LEAVING A TRACE

The Carpenter tried to cut through the hoofs of its horse, but his saw passed through the hoof without leaving a trace.

" No doubt I can kill it higher up," said the Carpenter, looking upwards. He could only see the Cavalier's legs, the rest of it was now far out of sight above the palm trees.

" If only you could overcome it," said Melinda, "we should be masters of the island." The Carpenter went on sawing the hoof of the Cavalier without any result ; it was always unmarked where the saw had passed through.

THE BLACK CAVALIER CASTS HIS SHADOW OVER THE ISLANDS : THE CAVALIER SHOOTS UP AND SWELLS. THE AEROPLANE MOUNTS TOWARDS HIS HEAD. THE CAVALIER'S EYE IS LIKE A BIG WINDOW. THE CAVALIER MELTS LIKE A SNOW MAN.

IT was not difficult to discover the Black Cavalier. He had stretched up at least a hundred yards above the level of the forest, and his snorting and purring filled the air like a thunderstorm. At times it would stop purring to look round with its great white eye. During one of these pauses it heard the aeroplane rising towards it, and began to wave its ridiculous little sting. It had become so immense that it blotted out part of the sky, and darkened the chain of islands with its shadow.

DARKENED THE CHAIN OF

ISLANDS WITH ITS SHADOW

The aeroplane rose straight upward, aiming for the Cavalier's eye. As it approached the Cavalier opened its great mouth and swallowed the aeroplane,

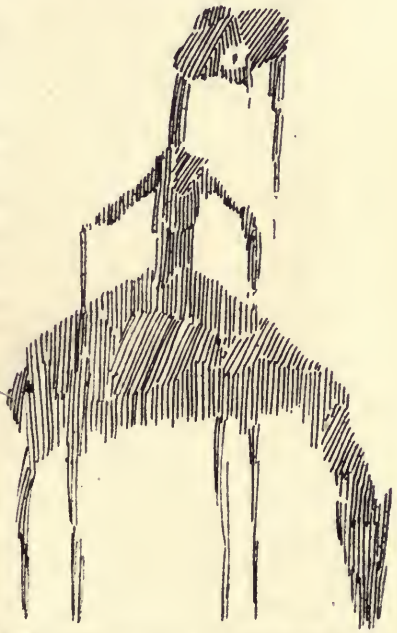
SWALLOWED THE AEROPLANE

which flew out of its ear a moment later unharmed. The sting was hardly large enough to be seen, but the Carpenter's saw was just as useless. Then the Carpenter thought of a plan. The Cavalier's eye was bigger than a captive balloon, and its black pupil was

like a great round window. The Carpenter gave Melinda one of the bags of sand, which he had brought for ballast, and told her to empty it when he said "Hop."

Then came a fight memorable in the histories of cavaliers and aeroplanes. The Carpenter tried to steer the aeroplane into the pupil of the Cavalier's eye, and the Cavalier turned its head hither and thither, and bent its tower-like neck this way and that to keep its eye safe from harm, trying at the same time to crush and swallow the aeroplane once and for all. But its hour had come. It lost sight of the aeroplane for a moment, and the Carpenter, seizing his opportunity, dived into its eye like an eagle entering its nest.

"Hop!" he cried, and, quick as thought, Melinda emptied the bag of sand. As soon as the sand touched its eye, the Black Cavalier crumpled up and melted away like a snow man. In a few seconds it was no taller than the palm trees, then it was as small as the plants below in the forest, and then it was so small that it disappeared under the grass and was nothing but a tiny black insect just as it had been when the Carpenter discovered it.



MELTED AWAY LIKE A SNOW MAN

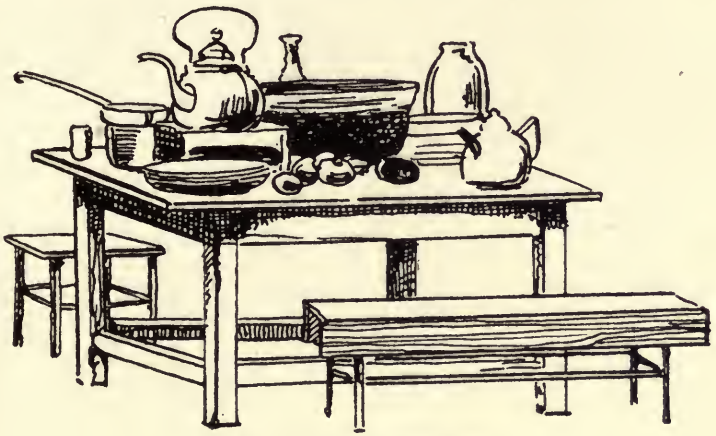
The aeroplane returned to earth once more, but this time with more assurance. It dropped down on to the island again perpendicularly, like a heavy feather falling.

TUTY AND TUTA: THE CARPENTER AND MELINDA DISCOVER THE DWELLING-PLACE OF TUTY AND TUTA. CURIOUS CONVERSATION OF THESE TWO PEOPLE. THE ROPE DANCER. THE TWO WOODEN MONSTERS. THE BIRDS PURSUE THE TWO TRAVELLERS.

MELINDA and the Carpenter jumped out when it reached the ground, and sat down to rest among the scented flowers and ferns under the trees. The birds were singing sweetly somewhere out of sight. The travellers felt very happy, and pleased that they had conquered the Black Cavalier. They were hungry, as you may imagine, and ate an enormous breakfast of buns and cherries and chocolate biscuits. When they had finished, the Carpenter ardently desired to chase the brightly coloured butterflies that were flying about, and even settling on the cherry he was eating, but he saw that Melinda was in a great hurry to go on and find Tuta and Tuty, and he was too polite to ask her to wait.

There was a rustling sound in the leaves near by, and the head of the Parrot Fiend appeared. He evidently had not yet heard of the defeat of the Black

Cavalier, for he still looked scared, and without saying a word he pointed to a stone balustrade that stood near by, unnoticed by the travellers, and once again disappeared. They immediately jumped up and leant over it and saw beneath them two radiant and beautiful people.

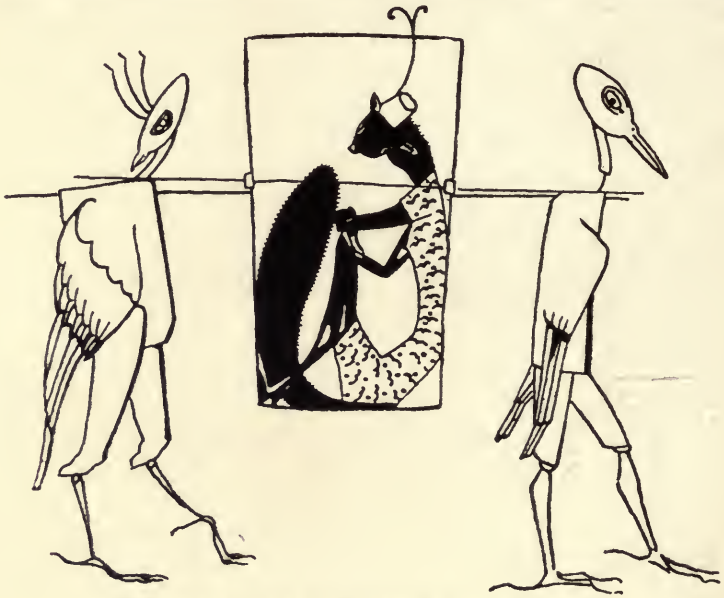


ALL THEIR POSSESSIONS

Evidently they were Tuta and Tuty. Their dwelling was open to the sky, for it never rained on the Round Island, and from above you could see all their possessions, small chairs and tables, and delicate crockery, everything necessary to a well-set-up establishment. It was round in shape like a circus, and carpeted with flowers and moss. There was a flower garden, a kitchen garden, an orchard, a stable, and a mill, busily grinding corn.

" That is where they grind the flour for the cakes they give to the birds," said Melinda. While they

stood looking down at the neat and prosperous household beneath them, they saw some cubic and spherical birds busily employed with a cage at the other end of the balustrade. Some of them were stretching a



BIRDS BUSILY EMPLOYED WITH A CAGE

cord from one end of the circus to the other. When this was done they opened the cage, and out jumped a lovely red squirrel, dressed as a rope-dancer. He sprang on to the silver cord, light as a feather, and began to dance with great agility. He leapt into the air and turned three or four somersaults before he touched the cord again, and performed a thousand more graceful tricks.

Melinda and the Carpenter applauded so loudly

that they attracted the attention of the two little people for whom the entertainment had been organised. They looked up and stared at the travellers, but they did not seem at all surprised to see them. Melinda and the Carpenter made signs that they would like to talk to them, but all the answer they got was the following disheartening conversation :

" Those are humans," said Tuta.

" Yes," said Tuty.

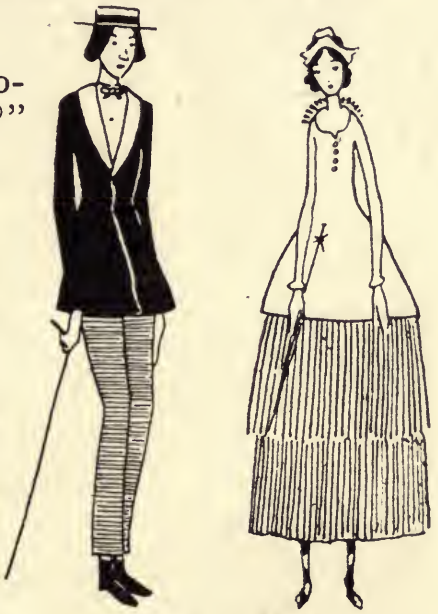
" Have you been introduced to the young girl ? " said Tuta.

" No, Mrs. Tuta."

" Have you been introduced to the young man ?" said Tuty.

" No, Mr. Tuty."

So, as it seemed that none of them had been introduced, Tuta and Tuty showed no further interest in the travellers, and did not even deign to look upwards again. They were not in the least curious, indeed they could not imagine anything outside their own home. They were not adventurous like the voyagers in the Blue Boat, and it is difficult to conjecture how they ever got wrecked on an island at all.



TUTY AND TUTA

THE LION WAS SHOWING HIS TEETH, BUT THE CHIMERA HAD LONGER CLAWS

The squirrel was still dancing on the rope, but suddenly he missed his footing and fell to the ground. Luckily there was a soft carpet of moss beneath, so that he could not have been badly hurt.

Melinda gave a little shriek, and pinched the Carpenter's arm, for the squirrel had fallen at the very feet of a big, yellow lion with red jaws, and a ferocious looking Chimera. The Lion was showing his teeth, but the Chimera had longer claws, and they both looked very alarming. They had evidently been posted there by the birds to prevent Tuta and Tuty from leaving the island if they wanted to do so, although they did not seem to want to do anything of the sort. The dancer lay quite still as though he had fainted, and the monsters did not move either. The birds who had brought the cage had settled down to a game of knuckle-bones, and noticed nothing wrong. At last one of them looked round at the travellers, and saw by the expression on their faces that something had happened. They got up and saw the dancing squirrel lying quite still

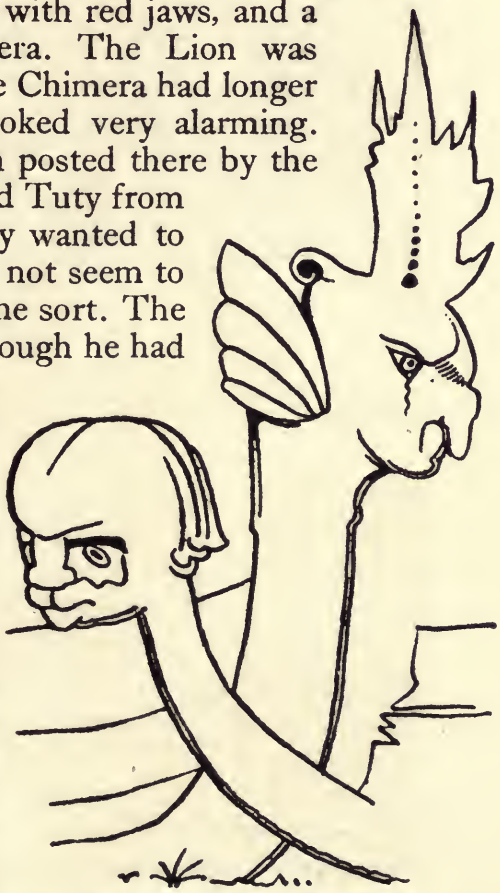


FIGURE-HEADS OF WRECKED SHIPS

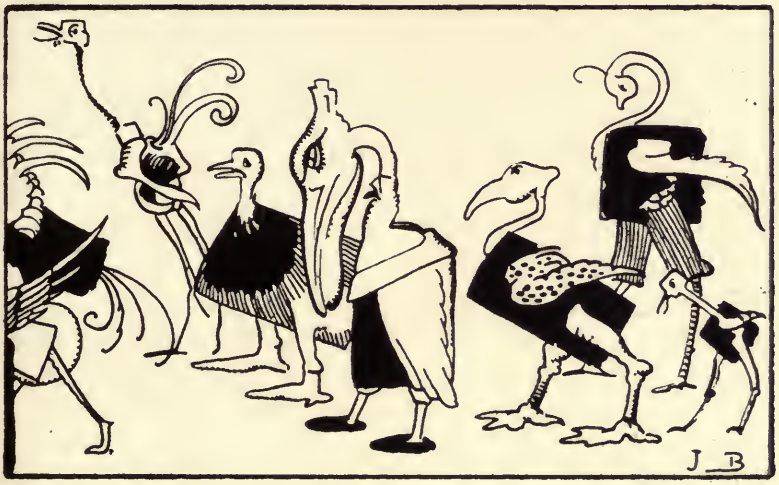
on the moss. Then one of them waved his claw in a signal to someone at the other side of the circus and a surprising thing happened. The two monsters began to move backwards through an open doorway just

THEY WERE FOLLOWED BY A CLOUD

behind them. As they moved they made loud rumbling and creaking sounds as though something wooden were being dragged over stones; then the door closed behind them with a clang.

"Those two monsters are made of wood, they are only figure-heads of wrecked ships," cried the Carpenter, and he and Melinda burst out laughing. In an instant they were followed by a cloud of cubic and spherical birds, whose wings darkened the air so that they could not see where they were going. Thousands of claws threatened them, and thousands of clacking beaks deafened them with a tremendous

uproar. They were pushed down a flight of stone steps, and through a narrow passage, where they passed the wooden monsters who had been dragged away from their post of guarding Tuta and Tuty.



OF CUBIC AND SPHERICAL BIRDS

The Carpenter managed to draw a wooden nail out of the Chimera as he passed, and kept it ever afterwards in memory of the Round Island.

They ran along the passage as fast as they could, trying to get away from the birds, and find the aeroplane, which they had carelessly left lying on the grass by the side of the balustrade. At last they reached the end of the passage and found that they had outdistanced the birds and emerged on the beach. The birds were still making a fearful din, but the sound seemed to be in the distance, and suddenly

it stopped and there was silence, a mysterious silence, almost worse than the noise.

The Carpenter had been scratched on the cheek and on the forehead, and Melinda bound up his face with his silk handkerchief. It was the same one he had used to wipe the dew off the aeroplane, and it was still wet, but she had nothing else.

" I think we will leave this Island of Cubic Birds as soon as may be," said the Carpenter, ruefully, feeling his head.

" Where shall we go ? " asked Melinda, eager for more adventures.

"We have enough provisions for two days," said the Carpenter thoughtfully, "and we can add fruit to that."

" You will pick it," said Melinda, remembering how she had been attacked by the bird who had caught her picking fruit.

" Certainly," replied the Carpenter. " And thus supplied," he went on, " we can go and look for the Blue Boat and our companions."

THE BOATMAN IS FOUND AGAIN : THEY DECIDE TO LEAVE THE ISLAND. THEY SEE A BROWN SPHERE DANCING ON THE PLAIN. THE BOATMAN COMES OUT OF HIS BARREL.

WHILE they stood on the sea-shore making plans, their attention was attracted to a curious, round, brown thing, which seemed to have been stranded by the waves on some rocks a little way out to sea. Melinda saw it first.

"Look, there, on the rocks!" she cried, pointing it out to the Carpenter. As she spoke the rising tide shifted the strange object from its resting place, and set it bobbing up and down on the water.

"It is coming towards us," said the Carpenter, and indeed it was bobbing closer and closer as the waves crept up the beach. At last they could see that it was a helmet covering a head, and the head emerged from a cask, and the head was the head of the Boatman!

The cask came nearer and nearer until it floated ashore. The Boatman stared at them but did not speak, then he laughed very happily with his mouth wide open like a baby, and held out his hands full of little star fish.

"At last!" he said when he had done laughing.

IT FLOATED ASHORE

"Dear Boatman!" said Melinda and the Carpenter, "how glad we are to see you. As there is a third place in our aeroplane you may hope to escape death from privation."

The Boatman was so overcome that he could only reply:

"At last, at last!"

"Hadn't you better come out of that barrel?" said the Carpenter, gently, but firmly. And as he

seemed to be stuck fast they pulled him out, head first. He stood on his head for a moment to recover himself, and then embraced his friends with tears of joy.

" Dear friends," he said, " I have been waiting here for you. I saw your indescribably valiant fight with the Black Cavalier. A parrot with a malicious eye told me that you were frivolous and impudent, and that the cubic birds would drive you to the coast at your first nonsensical mistake."

" How nice it is that we have found each other," said Melinda. She and the Boatman began to play with the star fish he had found. But the Carpenter was looking thoughtful.

" Boatman, where is your boat ? " he asked rather severely.

" I'll tell you all about it," said the Boatman, and he sat up on his heels and told them his story.

THE FATE OF THE WRECK AND COD: THE BOATMAN'S STORY. THE FIRE ON THE BOAT. THE BARREL FLOATS ON THE SEA. COD AND FLUTE FLEE ON THE SUBMARINE. BING AND SUN-AND-MOON ON CASKS, PETER, THE FRIEND, AND DRUM SEEK REFUGE ON THE WRECK. PROCESSION OF THE CASTAWAYS.

" MY lacquer box," began the Boatman, "must have been out of order, as the storm which it foretold, never appeared. And yet the clouds looked so black I thought they would break over our heads. The wind blew the smoke of my

cigarette so violently upwards that the sparks whirled about in the air, and it must have been one of those sparks that set fire to the Blue Boat.

"Fire!" cried the listeners, both together. "Was the Blue Boat burnt?"

"Most of it was," replied the Boatman. "It must have been badly made, for as soon as the middle part was burnt the rest of it fell to pieces."

"And you left it to burn, and lay in your barrel without moving hand or foot to try and stop it, you detestable creature?" cried Melinda, breathless with anger.

"Well, you see, I didn't know quite what was happening. I thought that the cries on deck were on account of the storm, and I thought the red glow of the flames was lightning."

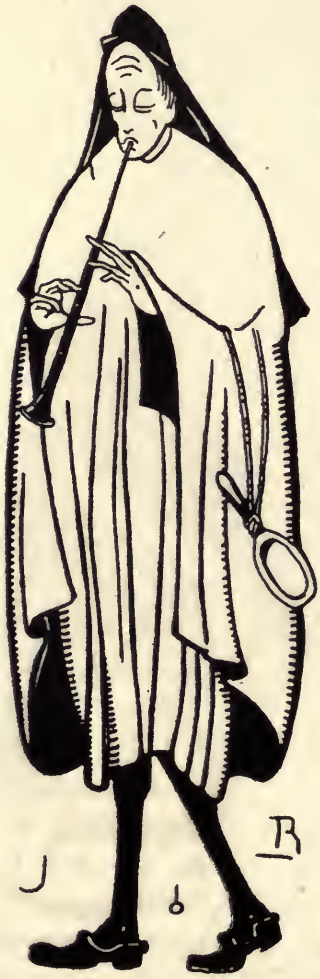
"Alas!" said Melinda. "So you did not move. You did nothing?"

"No," said the Boatman simply.

SET FIRE TO THE BLUE BOAT 85

"Then how were you saved?"

"When the boat fell to pieces I stuck fast in the barrel, and floated safely away on the water, which by that time was fairly calm."



FLUTE

"Is that all?" cried the Carpenter, as the Boatman did not go on. "Don't you know what happened to the others?"

"No," said the Boatman calmly, "that is not all. I was so upset that I was obliged to smoke one cigarette after another to calm myself."

"But our friends the musicians, the pride and joy of Fairyland, what has become of them?" cried Melinda, dancing with impatience.

"Cheer up!" said the Boatman, seating himself on a wet rock. "They are all safe as far as I know! Keep quiet, and I will tell you all about it. Cod was quite unhurt in his submarine, but he could only rescue one person, so he fished out Flute, who climbed into his place with supreme indifference. Then Cod sailed round about the wreckage and helped the rest to arrange for themselves

as best they could. Half of the Blue Boat was still untouched by the fire, so Peter, the Friend, and the Drummer, settled themselves on that. The rest of the boat was still burning. Bing and Sun-and-Moon followed my example and found a couple of barrels, which they tied together with a long waist belt so that they could keep each other company.

" Why, of course ! " said the Carpenter suddenly ; " that was what we saw burning out at sea ! "

" Then it wasn't a volcano after all," said Melinda.

" It was therefore necessary," continued the Boatman, taking no notice of the interruption, " to get away as quickly as possible. Peter arranged that the half-boat should be towed by Cod in the submarine, so Cod threw him a rope, and Peter, in his turn, threw one to Bing and Sun-and-Moon, who threw one to me. And so we started off in a long procession to discover land."

THE WHALES : THEY ARE ATTRACTED BY THE NASAL SOUND OF THE CLARIONET. THE WHALES LAUGH. THE WATERFALLS. THEY DO NOT KNOW WHERE THE OTHER CASTAWAYS ARE.

" NOW that is what I call a real adventure ! " cried Melinda, clapping her hands. " Oh, how I wish I had been there too."

" Wait a bit," said the Boatman. " As we floated away, Flute began to play a favourite funeral march of his and the squeaky notes of his clarionet attracted

FLUTE BEGAN TO PLAY

COD, THE CAPTAIN

PETER, THE FIDDLER

THE FRIEND AND DRUM

SUN-AND-MOON AND BING

THE BOATMAN AND THE WHALES

a family of whales. It was a very nice family, but it came too close. We were surrounded by mountains of shining black flesh. There were vast numbers of them, a whole dynasty I should think.

WAVE THEIR TAILS ABOUT

" Flute stopped playing in alarm, but the whales had already caught sight of us all strung out in a row behind the Shark, and they were tremendously amused at what they saw. Unfortunately their peals of laughter made them wave their tails about, so that

the water round us was churned into enormous spouts and cataracts of water, and we were tossed up and down, one moment high in the air and the next in the depths of the sea. The ropes came untied, everything was in confusion, and we were all dispersed in different directions, each one followed by a playful whale, who amused himself by rolling us over and over in the water.

I don't know when the other whales got tired of the game. The one who was innocently sporting with my barrel did not tire of it till evening, when he abandoned me on those rocks, from which I was able to watch you fighting and vanquishing the Black Cavalier.

"Is that all you know?" asked the Carpenter.

"That's all," said the Boatman.

They sat silently on the beach for a little while, each wondering what had happened to their friends.

THE GOLDEN COCK: THOUSANDS OF BIRDS WORSHIP THEIR GOD. THE BOATMAN FIRES HIS PISTOL. HE TAKES A SOUVENIR OF HIS FIRST SHIPWRECK

THE Carpenter gave the Boatman a whole bun to assuage his hunger, and then suggested that they should explore the sea to find their comrades. But first they would have to find the aeroplane, so they plunged once more into the forest of palm trees.

There was still no sound from the birds; the

island was completely silent, but they went crouching for fear that some of the birds might be watching for them. They walked like this a long distance through the silent forest, until at last they came to an open space, and then they knew why everything

THEY WALKED LIKE THIS

had been so quiet. All the cubic and spherical birds were there, crowded together, bowing towards the ground in an attitude of worship. They were ranged in circles round a brilliant golden object ; they were worshipping their Golden God, who had at last come to the island to visit them.

All of a sudden the Carpenter touched Melinda's arm, and said in an excited whisper :

" Don't you see ? It's the beautiful wooden cock I nearly caught with my saw ! "

And it was indeed the same wooden cock that his saw had cut from a steeple, and which had afterwards fallen on the Island of Birds.

The Boatman had to have all this explained to him, and immediately wanted to possess the Golden Cock as a souvenir of his first wreck, or rather, though he would not have confessed it, of his first voyage. In the midst of the silence that reigned over the island, he placed a cap in his pistol, and fired into the air. The birds rose from the ground with fluttering wings in a great commotion, thinking that the god had made the noise to proclaim its anger. They flew high up into the blue sky with terrified cries circling round and round the island, but not daring to return.

The Boatman did not lose a moment in seizing the Golden Cock, while the others looked round for the aeroplane. They discovered it lying under some ferns, and hastily unfolded it and mounted to their places. The aeroplane rose slowly owing to the additional weight of the Boatman, and the Carpenter was afraid they would not get very far.

They flew out over the sea for a little way to escape discovery by the birds, and then looked anxiously at the earth below. They saw that the archipelago contained at least five or six islands, and the Carpenter proposed that they should visit each in turn to try and discover their friends, and find out which of the islands were habitable and which were not.

" Let us begin with the one we are flying over now," said Melinda.

FIRED INTO THE AIR

The others agreed and the aeroplane descended as light as a feather on the island next to the Island of Cubic Birds.

COD HUNG : AGONY OF THE TRAVELLERS. UNFORTUNATE COD! THEY DISCOVER THE PERPETRATORS.

THE sun was shining brightly as they alighted on the next island, and the earth glittered as though it had been sprinkled with diamond dust. The trees that fringed the beach were covered with red and purple flowers, and the sand was as yellow as gold.

But though the island was so beautiful, they felt anxious and depressed as though something was wrong, or just going to be wrong. They did not tell each other what a gloomy effect the island was having on them, but set out at once to explore, for their stock of provisions was running low, and it was very necessary to find some more food. The trees looked as though they might bear fruit, so they walked away from the sea towards the forest. Presently they found themselves on the bank of a wide river, which cut the island into halves, so that they were standing on a little island and looking across the river at a bigger one.

" We might as well cross over," said the Carpenter, beginning to unfold the aeroplane again as he spoke. But the Boatman was staring across the water with a terrified expression.

"What is the matter?" asked the others. The Boatman pointed, and they saw the body of Cod,

COD, HANGING ON A BRANCH

hanging on a branch of a dead tree on the other side of the river.

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" Unfortunate Cod ! " they cried, wringing their hands with grief at the sight. Suddenly Melinda caught sight of some curious beings, more or less

YOU CAN SEE THEY HAVE POINTED HEADS

human in appearance, lying asleep under the trees quite close to them.

" What horrid looking things ! " she cried. " They are armed with bows and arrows."

" And knives ! " said the Boatman, getting behind

a rock. Then the Carpenter began to tremble with fear, and said in a desperate way :

" We are on the Island of Baligoors and Coomasis. I recognise them by the description the Parrot gave us on the Island of Birds. You can see they have pointed heads and sloping shoulders just as he described."

" Unfortunate us ! " cried Melinda, remembering the terrible things the Parrot had told them about the Baligoors and Coomasis.

" We cannot use the aeroplane to cross the river," said the Carpenter. " The noise of the engine might awaken these creatures, and then they would attack us."

" We must wade across," said the Boatman, so he took off his shoes with the planks to find out the depth of the water. But it was much too deep to wade, and there were no rocks or stones to give foothold.

" Oh, unfortunate Cod ! " they cried. " What shall we do ? "

THE PIGWING : AN AMBASSADOR. THE ANIMALS OF THE ISLAND. THE BALIGOORS SLEEP IN THE DAYTIME.

WHILE they sat mournfully by the river bank, wondering what to do, a Pigwing came and sat on a branch above their heads. A Pigwing is a kind of guinea pig with long wings that roll up like the spring of a watch when the animal is not

flying. The Carpenter looked with interest at this creature, which he was inclined to regard as an insect. It was certainly rather larger than the ordinary

THE PIGWING

run of insects, but his travels had taught the Carpenter to expect unusual things on a voyage.

The Pigwing sat looking at them for a few moments, out of the corner of his eye. He was the ambassador sent out by the animals, who lived on the island, to

assure the strangers of their readiness to be friendly and helpful if help were needed. He seemed satisfied at last with his observations, and came down to a lower branch, bowing and stretching out his arms in welcome.

" Have you any bows and arrows, Sirs and Madam ? " he asked.

" No, Mr. Pigwing," they replied.

The Pigwing lifted his left arm above his head. At this signal a host of animals appeared from all sides, some from the trees, some from the river, and some from holes in the rocks and burrows in the ground.

Melinda drew a little closer to the other two, but the animals looked so friendly that she was not really afraid.

" Have you any knives ? " asked the Pigwing.

" Only these, Mr. Pigwing," said the Boatman and the Carpenter showing him their pocket-knives, which were not very large. After a few minutes' reflection, the Pigwing lifted his other arm. All the animals began to move towards them, and did not stop until the Pigwing lowered his arm. They were now quite close, but none of them spoke. Even the Pigwing was silent.

" Can we do anything for you, my dear friends ? " inquired the Carpenter politely.

" Thank you, no. We like looking at you," replied the Pigwing. A big giraffe with a horn spoke.

" You are very like the Baligoors and Coomasis," he said, " except that you are not asleep, and can even see by daylight."

A BIG GIRAFFE WITH A HORN SPOKE

THEY ARE ASLEEP, REPLIED

THE PIGWING, SMILING

" They look less cruel than the Baligoors," said a small tortoise with long paws. " Except the little one there," he added, pointing at Melinda, who was so vexed that she asked the Boatman for his pistol.

" Don't quarrel with them whatever you do," said the Carpenter in a prudent whisper, and the Boatman nodded his head in agreement. " They are kind and friendly, whereas the Baligoors are certain to attack us if they see us."

Melinda saw that he was right, and tried to forget that she had been insulted.

" But aren't you afraid of being so close to these cruel creatures," the Carpenter asked, pointing to the Baligoors, asleep under the trees.

" They are asleep," replied the Pigwing, smiling.

" But if they wake up ? "

" They cannot wake up unless someone goes and shakes them, and even then they could not see till nightfall. They have red eyes ! " he added, as though that explained everything.

BUILDING A BRIDGE. THE GIRAFFE AND THE TORTOISE SPEAK. ALL THE ANIMALS HELP TO BUILD THE BRIDGE. COD'S DRESS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE TREE. COD DRESSED IN A GREAT CLOAK. NEWS OF FLUTE. HOW COD ESCAPED DEATH.

WHEN the Carpenter heard this he at once began scheming to free the animals from their cruel enemies, as he had freed the

birds from the Black Cavalier. He told his plans to the Pigwing, whose wings uncurled with horror.

" But there are more than a thousand of them ! " he cried when he had strength to speak, " and they are all as strong as lions and ten times as ferocious ! "

" Oh, poor Cod, unfortunate Cod ! " they cried.

" The fish is your friend ? " asked the Giraffe, pointing to Cod.

" Yes, yes, our dear friend, Cod ! "

" Alas for your poor friend ! " said the Tortoise. " They will eat him for their supper this evening ! "

" No ! " they cried all at once. " We will at least give him a burial worthy of the Captain of the Shark."

But they had yet to cross the river, and the Pigwing feared that the noise of the aeroplane might waken even the Baligoors.

" But, cheer up," he said, " we will make a bridge. We have still some hours before they wake."

Then all the larger animals waded into the river, carrying rocks and stones, which they placed in a line from bank to bank. Then they stood on the rocks while the smaller animals handed them clay and gravel and branches and strips of seaweed to fill up the gaps and make the bridge firm and steady. The birds flew across with mud and grasses in their beaks, and the Tortoise tied the smaller rocks together with bindweed. Last of all, the Beaver arrived with branches, which were laid across the bridge from one side to the other. Then it was finished, and, in much less time than it takes to tell they had all

MAKE THE BRIDGE

FIRM AND STEADY

run across to the foot of the tree where Cod was hanging.

The Boatman took the planks from his feet and climbed the tree, and cut the cord that held Cod's body.

THE BEAVER ARRIVED

And now, what do you think ? It was not Cod at all. It was only his fish costume, stuffed full of grass and leaves, like a fish in a glass case. The travellers did not know whether to laugh or to cry.

" They have probably eaten him already," said a little black elephant with hedgehog spines.

" But what is this ? " said the Boatman, who had been examining the fish costume. He showed them a small piece of paper which he had found in Cod's pocket. They read :

IF SOME CHARITABLE SOUL READS THIS, HE WILL FIND THE UNFORTUNATE OWNER OF THIS COSTUME IN THE GROTTO ON THE SMALL ISLAND. ENTRANCE UNDER RED PINE.

(Signed)

COD, Captain of Shark

CUT THE CORD THAT HELD COD'S BODY

The Boatman hastily tied the planks on to his feet again, and they all ran back over the bridge to the small island, and searched for the red pine. When they found it, the Carpenter crept underneath it to the grotto, while the others waited outside. At last he came out again with Cod, who was wrapped up in the Carpenter's brown cloak.

WRAPPED UP IN THE CARPENTER'S BROWN CLOAK

"What has happened to Flute?" asked Melinda, when they had all recovered from the excitement of meeting again.

"He has found a country, which gives him complete satisfaction," replied Cod.

"It evidently didn't satisfy you," remarked the Carpenter, "or you wouldn't have come away."

"I will tell you all about it," said Cod. "Some hours ago," he began, "a sudden night fell over all the islands. I could see the cause. You were fighting in the air with a vast, black cavalier, whose shadow was thrown across the sea. I immediately boarded the *Shark* again, leaving Flute behind on the island, where we had taken refuge from the storm, and steered in all haste towards the point where your battle was raging. It was so dark that I could hardly see where I was going, and when I came to the shore of this island I thought it was the one over which you were fighting, so I jumped ashore. Twelve men

THEIR RED EYES SHONE LIKE FIRE

with red eyes caught me and dragged me near to the spot where you found me. They were very ferocious, and their red eyes shone like fire. They cut the collar of my costume with a large knife, taking no notice of my struggles and cries, and then drew me out of it, growling like bears all the time. They must have thought it was my real skin, for their own were covered with scales and feathers. Then they began to flourish their knives and I thought that my end had come. But just at that moment you conquered the Black Cavalier, and the light shone once more. The red-eyed creatures seemed to be suddenly powerless. They staggered away with their hands to their eyes, and left me free to do as I pleased. So it was you who saved my life, dear Carpenter," he ended, embracing the Carpenter with tears of gratitude.

THE ISLAND OF SILENCE OR FLUTE'S ISLAND. TOWARDS THE ISLAND. FIRST ENCOUNTER ON THE ISLAND. THE CARPENTER, MELINDA, COD, AND THE BOATMAN LEAVE THE ISLAND OF BIRDS. A COOMASI IS DROWNED. BAD WEATHER.

COD then had to tell them all about Flute.

"Flute is an odd creature," he began.

"No, not odd, he is only a philosopher," said Melinda, who did not know what "philosopher" meant.

"At this moment," Cod went on, "he is sitting

under a tree, reading old picture-books or playing on his clarionet to charm the serpents."

"Serpents?" cried Melinda a little anxiously.

"Quite harmless," said Cod reassuringly.

"But what does he live on?" asked the Carpenter, who was occasionally practical.

"The birds bring him bread and fruit, and the storks bring him water," replied Cod.

"Let us go at once!" cried all three together. "We have never been so hungry in all our lives!"

They made ready to leave the Island of Baligoors at once. But first of all they took leave of the kindly animals, who had done so much to help them in their troubles. The Carpenter promised to come back some day with an army and free the island from Baligoors and Coomasis. In the meantime dusk was falling, and it was dangerous to stay. The animals began to say good-bye one after another, and went off to their homes, for very soon the Baligoors would wake up.

Cod launched the *Shark*, and he and the Boatman got into it, while the others took flight in the aeroplane. And then they set out in the cool of the evening to find Flute's island. The sea was calm and blue, and the day was not yet over, but before they had gone far, they felt again the strange uneasiness that had come over them when they landed on the island. Suddenly they knew that something horrible was near them, and the Boatman, turning round, saw a hideous Coomasi, crouched ready to spring on the tail of the *Shark*. He gave a loud cry, and the Coomasi

leaped upon him in a flash, and they fell together into the sea. Happily, the planks the Boatman had tied to his feet caught in the sides of the Submarine

THEY FELL TOGETHER INTO THE SEA

and held him safely above the water, while the Coomasi fell right in and did not reappear for some moments.

Then the Boatman showed great presence of mind.

COMING TO THE SURFACE ONCE MORE

While the Carpenter was pulling him back into the boat he handed him his pistol. Unfortunately the ammunition had got wet, but as it happened, there was no need of any weapon. The Coomasi could not swim ; his arms were too short, and, after coming to the surface once more, he disappeared for good. The travellers continued on their way rejoicing, but as the twilight deepened, the sky grew cloudy, and the sea went black. The Boatman had lost his lacquer box, but they needed nothing to tell them that there was going to be a storm.

THE STORM. THE AEROPLANE IS PUT ABOARD THE SUBMARINE. THE TRAVELLERS CATCH HOLD OF THE AEROPLANE. THEY PREPARE TO DIE. MELINDA FAINTS, THE WIND HOWLS.

EVERYONE knows how a storm comes up. The clouds gathered fast and thick, the wind blew gustily, and the sea was black and threatening. The Carpenter alighted on the submarine and folded the aeroplane into its box. Then he touched the box with the magic diamond to make it grow

small enough to put in his pocket, but instead of growing smaller it grew bigger and bigger until it nearly covered the submarine.

"The diamond has gone mad," said the Carpenter, unhappily. "What are we to do?"

"I know," said Cod, with unusual sense for him, "if we sit one on each corner we shall keep it balanced. I should never have got all of you into the submarine. I think your diamond has a great deal of sense."

He was quite right. When they had taken their places, one at each corner of the box, the submarine steadied itself on the waves, and the wind did not catch them, especially as when it blew very fiercely they crouched down over their knees as Chinese people do when they pray. But the storm grew so violently that presently all their ingenuity went for nothing. For the waves threw the submarine and the box and the four passengers into the air and the wind dashed them down into the sea again. They all clung to one another and the box and the sides of the submarine, thinking that the end was near. Sometimes the box was tilted to one side so that they looked like fish displayed on a slab in a fishmonger's shop, and then it would right itself only just in time to save them from drowning.

"Whoever survives this ——" shouted Melinda, trying to make herself heard above the storm.

"No one will survive this!" shouted the Carpenter, dismally in reply.

"Let us tie ourselves to the box," suggested the

THREW THE BOX AND THE FOUR PASSENGERS INTO THE AIR

Boatman, who liked tying himself on to things almost as much as he liked tying them on to himself. So, with great difficulty, they all managed to tie themselves on to the corners of the box. The Boatman unfastened one of his planks and used the string to tie himself on with ; the Carpenter used the cord that he had brought for his saw ; Melinda used her little silk sash ; and Cod, who had nothing in the world except the Carpenter's brown cloak, had to content himself with holding on tightly to a ring on the box.

In spite of the wind it was very hot.

"Perhaps it is the end of the world ! " said Melinda.

It seemed as though she was right; at a moment when the *Shark* was almost overturned by the force of the wind, an immense wave hurled itself right over them, and filled the Submarine with water, for Cod, as you may remember, had left the lid, which covered the opening, at home. The *Shark* immediately sank beneath the waves, and Melinda fainted. The Boatman wept because he could not hide himself as he generally did in time of danger. The Carpenter held his collection of butterflies up above his head so that

HIS COLLECTION OF BUTTERFLIES UP ABOVE HIS HEAD

it should not be caught by the angry waves. Cod, who had no initiative, just waited to see what would happen. The box was still floating somehow or other, and looked very like the four of diamonds from a pack of cards with its four passengers clinging one to each corner. It was a strange voyage. Melinda, having recovered, felt sure that it was nothing but a dream, but it was queerer than any dream she had ever had before. The thunder growled like a bad-tempered ogre, the wind screamed and moaned, red and yellow lightning made jagged openings in the black clouds, and the rain poured down on the sea. Meanwhile the box still floated and the wind and the waves played catch with it.

LAND ! ! AN IMMENSE WAVE WASHES THE RAFT ON TO THE ISLAND. THEY SPEND THE NIGHT ON A HILL. NO WIND AND ALWAYS SUN. THE SILENT ONES UNDER THEIR TREES. THEY HAVE FLAT HOUSES AND NO KITCHENS. THEY LIVE ON FRUIT AND NUTS.

BUT Fortune had not deserted them. Suddenly Cod placed his hands round his mouth to make his voice carry further, and shouted :

" I see land. I think it must be the Island of Silence ! "

" Is it far ? " shouted the others, but their voices were drowned in a whirlpool of water and spray. When the wave had passed, the lightning gave them

a brief glimpse of the land Cod had pointed out. But it was still far distant, and the box was being tossed about like a cork, up into the air and down again into the sea. A huge wave came, huger than any that had come before, and lifted them right out

THEY WERE ON FLUTE'S ISLAND

of the water. They dropped like a stone, and there was a shock, which knocked the breath out of their bodies. Instead of falling back into the sea they had been thrown on to dry land.

They were on Flute's Island, the Island of Silence.

They cried for joy, but no one could have distinguished the tears from the sea water running down their faces.

The Carpenter, fearing that they might be swept away from land as suddenly as they had been thrown on to it, prudently suggested that they should not unfasten themselves from the box until they had walked further inland. In this way three of them still fastened to the box, while Cod held up the fourth corner, they climbed to the summit of a little hill. The storm was still at its height, and showed no signs of abating, and they were tired and hungry and wet to the skin. Melinda lay down under a rock and went to sleep: the Carpenter put one of his precious boxes under her head for a pillow, and covered her with his large silk handkerchief.

Then he and the other two lay down and slept. As they slept the storm, not touching this hill, gradually died down over the sea. This storm marked the end of the second day of their travels.

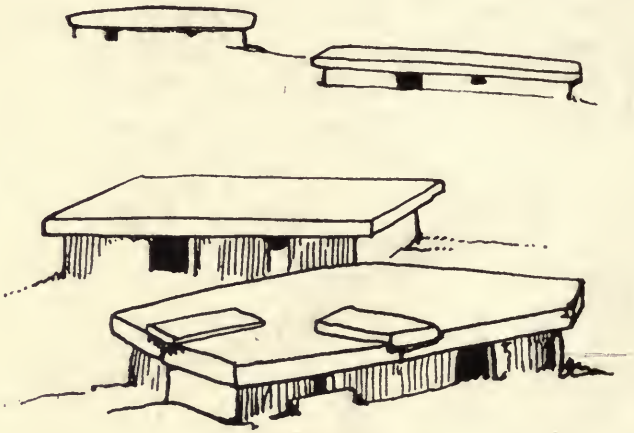
AND WENT TO SLEEP

The next morning they woke up, feeling brave and strong again, and set out at once to explore the island. First of all they stood on the little hill for a while to spy out the land. They could see no traces of the storm.

AT THE RIGHT SIDE OF EACH OF THE MEN SAT A ROW OF SONS

"Wind is unknown here," said Cod, who knew the place. "The sun shines all the time just enough to keep the inhabitants pleasantly warm."

The whole of the island seemed to be covered with palm trees, set at equal distances from one another.



FLAT BUILDINGS

In the circle of shade under each tree sat a silent and motionless human being; the men had great bushy masses of hair standing out round their heads, the women wore their hair falling over their shoulders, so that it almost entirely covered them. Each of them had a large open book, which they were either reading or pretending to read. At the right side of each of the men sat a row of sons, placed according to size, the biggest being nearest to his father. At the right side of each of the women was a row of daughters, arranged in the same way. The children sat

thus till the hour for recreation, their elders never moved at all during the daytime.

"Are there no houses?" asked Melinda.

Cod pointed out some broad, flat buildings, rather like cucumber frames.

"They only use their houses for sleeping in," he said, "so it would be useless to build them higher."

"Then are their kitchens underground?"

"They do not need kitchens. They live on fruit and nuts, especially nuts."

HOW THE SILENT ONES LIVE. A BIRD SINGS IN THE SKY. THEY ARE FED BY THE GALIPODES. STORKS BRING THEM FRESH WATER. THE YOUNG SILENT ONES CATCH FLIES. THE TRULY WONDERFUL PEACOCK. PUNISHMENT OF VARIOUS FAULTS.

THE island was so quiet that it seemed to be listening to a single bird singing somewhere in the sky, the only sound to listen to. The travellers had noticed already that the palm trees, which sheltered the Silent Beings, were planted at regular intervals like the trees in a nursery garden, and now they saw that a notice board was fastened to each one, inscribed with some pretty and serious name, such as Jack Robinson, 103 Palm Tree Walk, Island of Silence.

Not one of the Silent Beings turned their heads to look at the strangers as they passed by; indeed

they seemed unaware of their presence. It need hardly be said that Melinda was extremely offended at this inattention towards her.

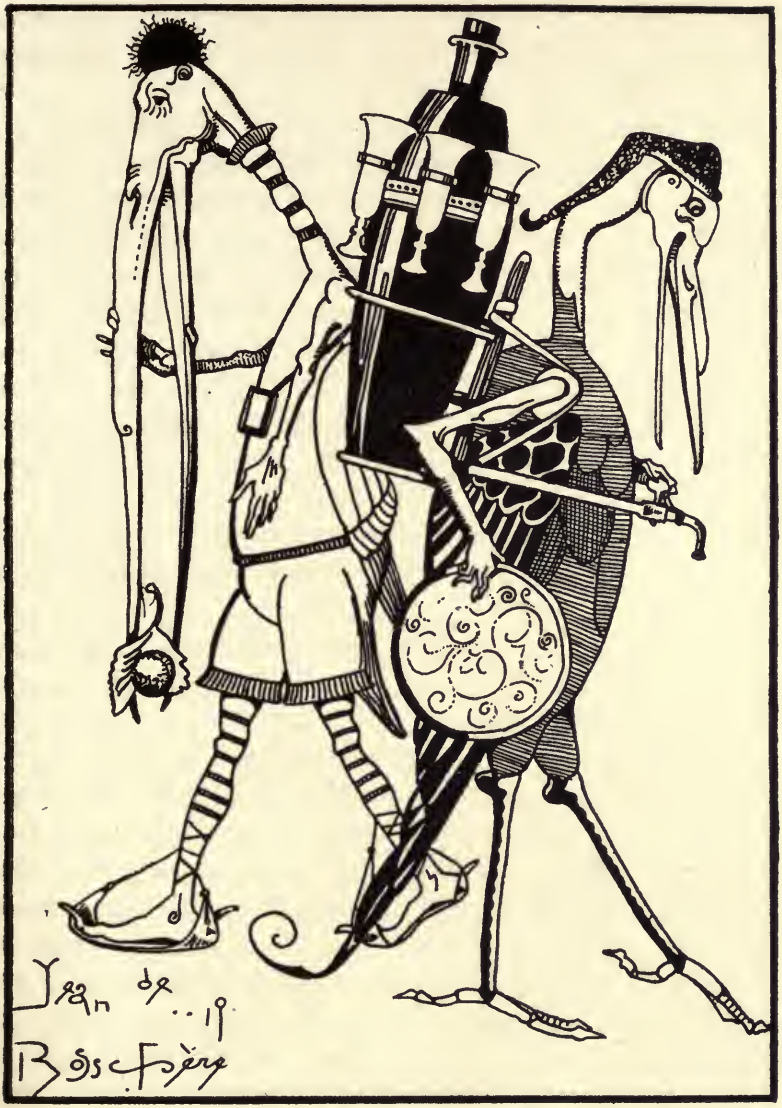
The bird, who had been singing, grew tired and flew to earth, and another took his place. They noticed that the new bird had flown out of a thick wood in the middle of the island. Cod told them that some of the trees there were bread-fruit trees, and some bore nuts, and that one at least bore the fruit of Eternity, which the very oldest and wisest of the Silent Ones were sometimes allowed to eat, but no one else. Cod also showed them little fountains standing here and there, whose clear water sparkled like diamond rings.

They saw tall storks standing near the fountains, filling great pitchers, which they then fastened on their backs.

" Those are the distributors of water ! " said Cod. He spoke in a whisper, so as not to offend the people, who worshipped silence.

" Why is each pitcher fitted with pipes and a tap ?" asked Melinda, who was sometimes very observant.

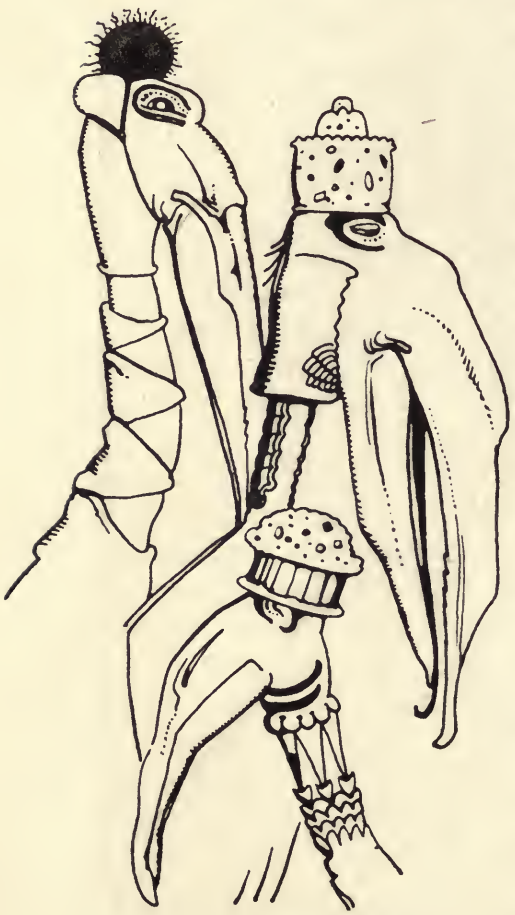
" You will see," said Cod. The stork nearest them unfastened a tray, which had been hanging from his belt, and placed on it tall drinking glasses, which had been fixed to the sides of the pitcher. Then he filled them with water from the tap at the end of the pipe, which was passed over his shoulder from the pitcher on his back. He then walked from tree to tree, placing fresh water in the cupboards, which stood in front of each of the Silent Beings. These



THOSE ARE THE DISTRIBUTORS OF WATER

cupboards were made of palm leaves, and looked rather like green lanterns. They held all the things that their owners wanted to preserve from the dust and heat.

As the travellers followed the storks back again to the drinking fountains they met the Galipodes. The Galipodes were very clean and white like polished ivory, and they wore little hats made of pastry. Their arms were so short that they could not reach their beaks, and so could not touch the provisions they were carrying wrapped delicately in palm leaves.



LITTLE HATS MADE OF PASTRY

The travellers stood near by one of the palm trees and watched one of the Galipodes come and place a fine red and yellow apple in the green cupboard. They saw that he wore a label round his neck, bearing the same name and address as the one on the notice-board of the Silent Being he was serving.

" Each one has a Galipode to serve him and his family," said Cod. " And there is one stork for every eight families."

" That is very obliging and useful of the birds on this island," interposed the Boatman.

" In return," Cod went on, " the young Silent Beings, who have only taken half vows, spend some of their time in making traps for the animals, who harm the birds. The Silent Beings and the birds simply exchange services, and there is great sympathy between them. The young birds are punished for small faults by being set to catch flies for the Silent Beings ; the young Silent Beings on their side expiate their faults by carrying the train of the President of the Birds. But, of course, if they are very bad, they are sent away to the Country of Marionettes.

The President of the Birds was naturally a large peacock. He happened to be crossing the island at that very moment in a most majestic fashion. He was an exceptional bird, even for a peacock, and it seemed impossible that he could be as intelligent as he was beautiful.

" We will ask this peacock if he thinks you are pretty," said the Carpenter to Melinda, remembering her vanity on the Island of Cubic Birds. But his joke came to nothing, for Cod hastily reminded him that no questions were allowed on the Island of Silence. He added that it would be better if they talked less even among themselves.

" Tell me, all the same," said the Carpenter, " why

LITTLE HORN OF LEAVES WHICH COVERS THEIR FACES

it is that the children who carry the Peacock's train wear that little horn of leaves which covers their faces ? "

" Their punishment is a purely personal matter," replied Cod, " so there is no need for other people to see them and make them feel humiliated."

The Boatman thought to himself that this would be an excellent way of hiding. One would only need larger leaves and more of them.

AN EXCELLENT WAY OF HIDING

BREAKFAST. THE TRAVELLERS FIND FLUTE AGAIN. THEY BREAKFAST SITTING FACING THE SEA. MELINDA WANTS TO SPEAK TO A SILENT ONE.

THE travellers had not breakfasted, and were almost overcome with hunger and weariness, but so great was their curiosity that they walked on and on until they came to the last Silent Being of all.

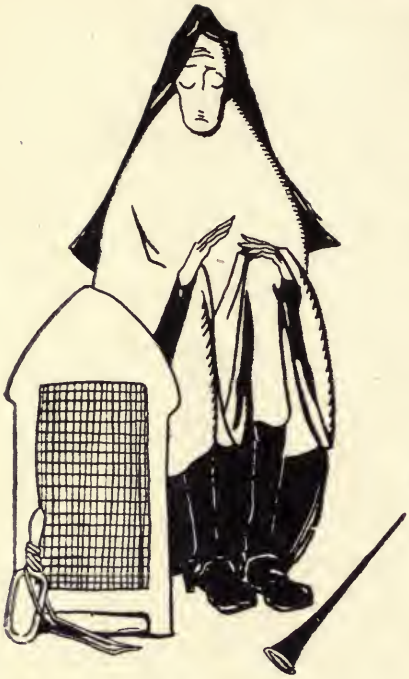
" Oh ! " cried Melinda.

" Goodness gracious ! " exclaimed the Carpenter.

" How in the world ? " began the Boatman.

They all stopped short, open-mouthed with surprise, before the last of the Silent Beings.

" You may well be surprised ! " said Cod, for it was Flute !



IT WAS FLUTE

He could see who they were, but he did not make the slightest movement to greet them, and Cod would not let them approach him. All three began asking so many questions that he could not answer them all.

"He has taken the whole vow. He must not move or speak," he explained when, at last, he could hear himself speak.

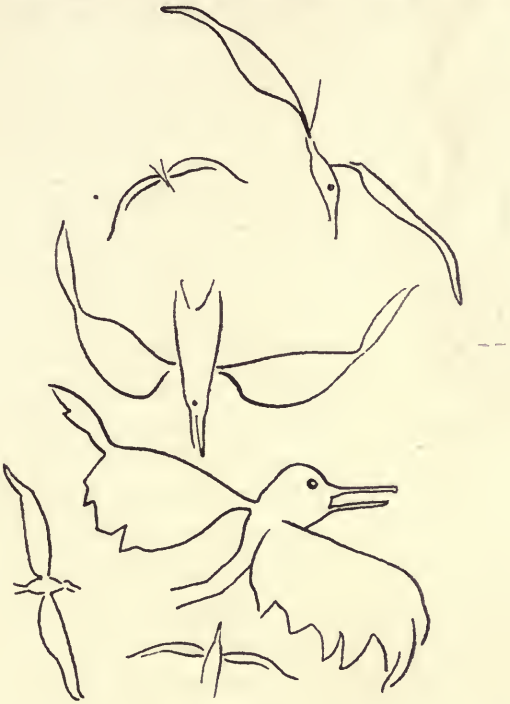
"Then we have lost one of our friends!" cried Melinda, and fainted away. But this was partly because she was so hungry.

Cod told them that they could not sit under any of the trees without taking at least half a vow of silence, but if they sat in a row on the beach, facing the sea, the birds would consider them as guests, and serve them with breakfast. So they revived Melinda with a palm leaf full of water, and all went and sat in a row on the seashore.

Melinda was longing to speak to one of the Silent Beings. Silence always made her feel so nervous that she wanted to scream. She was therefore greatly relieved when it was suddenly broken by the crowing of a cock, which made such a shrill sound in the midst of the stillness that it seemed as though the

sky was being rent asunder. Then a cuckoo sang his two monotonous notes six times.

At this double signal from the cuckoo and the cock, the Silent Beings moved at last and opened their



SEAGULLS

green cupboards for the food the storks and the Galipodes had placed there. The kindly creatures then brought food and drink for the strangers on the sea-shore. It was a pretty sight for the seagulls playing on the rocks to see four people sitting in a row, looking out over the water, eating red and yellow fruit, and drinking fresh water out of high cups.

THE PURSUIT. MELINDA DISCOVERS TWO SILENT ONES WHO SPEAK. PURSUIT IN THE VALLEY. THE SILENT ONE ENTREATS MELINDA. MELINDA USES HER LITTLE ELECTRIC TORCH. THE SILENT ONE AND MELINDA GO THROUGH A CUPBOARD. A MARIONETTE'S CORPSE. A PROCESSION.

"THEN do they really never speak?" asked Melinda, for the hundredth time, though Cod had assured her a hundred times that they never did.

"If they did," he said, "they would have to go away to the Country of Marionettes, where the people are only agitated dolls, who fill their lives with music and vain sounds."

"That must be much more amusing than it is here; at any rate, if there is music," replied Melinda, but suddenly she stopped speaking for, just behind the hill where they were sitting, she saw two young Silent Beings talking together in whispers.

"I can speak to those two anyway," she thought to herself. "They will have no excuse for not answering me." She got up and walked away from her companions without being noticed. At first she went slowly, as though she was only taking a stroll with no particular object, but when she came to a curve in the hill, which hid her, she began to run, and ran as hard as she could towards the two Silent Beings. One of them took to his heels the moment he caught

sight of her, and immediately disappeared, so that Melinda never knew what became of him. The other one ran in the opposite direction across a clear space, and Melinda did not think twice, but followed him as fast as her feet would carry her.

The Silent Being took care to run through thickets and crevices in the hills, so that no one else should see him and find out that he had broken his vow. He jumped over streams and pushed through bushes and brambles, Melinda in hot pursuit, until they reached a deep valley, which appeared to mark the boundary of the Silent Country, for here the birds were singing. The young Silent Being was beginning to slacken his speed ; he was now only a few paces in front of Melinda. Once or twice he even threw himself on his knees and looked back towards her with imploring eyes, stretching out his hands in a gesture of supplication. But each time, as Melinda did not stop running, he jumped up again, and ran on as before.

" Even if he is discovered," thought Melinda, " he will only have to carry the Peacock's train for a few days with a little horn of leaves on his head. There's nothing to make such a fuss about."

She did not know that a much graver fate awaited the Silent Being at the end of the valley. But he knew only too well, and every now and then he tried wildly to escape by climbing up the steep rocks that shut them in. But all his efforts were in vain, and at last the valley ended in a dark tunnel.

There was nothing to guide Melinda but the sound

ONCE OR TWICE HE EVEN

of his footsteps in front of her, but she went on, though she was beginning to be frightened. For a few minutes she heard the footsteps ahead of her; then they stopped, and the tunnel was absolutely silent. Melinda ran on, hoping to find the end of it, but having nothing now to guide her she continually knocked her head against the slimy walls, for the tunnel ran in twists and curves. Then, to her great joy, she remembered that the Carpenter had given her a new electric torch to take care of. She pulled it out of her pocket, and held it in her outstretched hand, so that its rays lit up the darkness, which surrounded her. Just in front of her she was surprised to see a large cupboard, the door of which was closed. She opened it, and saw the terrified face of the young Silent Being, blinking under the rays of the electric torch.

Melinda tried to catch hold of him, but he escaped her by stepping backwards, and when she jumped into the cupboard to follow him she found that he had disappeared, and while she searched the dark

THREW HIMSELF ON HIS KNEES

corners of the cupboard for him the floor suddenly began to sink, carrying her down with it.

She found herself in a meadow starred with white daisies. She turned to shut the cupboard door, but there was no cupboard, no trace of a cupboard. She might have thought that she had been dreaming but for the young Silent Being, who was lying at her feet. She bent over him, and found that he was a Silent Being no longer; he was now only a little marionette in a faint. His face was still quite drawn with terror. Melinda tried to revive him, but she had never been taught how to revive a fainting marionette.

She shook him. Played on her lyre. Beat on her drum; but still he did not move, so she gave it up at last in despair, and looked round her for help.

The country she found herself in was more beautiful and less simple than the one she had left. It was all nicely painted and varnished, and the sun was shining brightly on the green trees and fields, and the red roofs of little houses in the distance. She

longed to explore it, but she could not go away and leave the unconscious Marionette, so she stayed in the meadow and sat for a long time holding his head on her lap.

She was beginning to wonder if the country was inhabited at all when she heard sounds coming towards her, confused noises of bells and drums, deep whistles, and shrill cries that made her think of a Punch and Judy show.

MARIONETTE IN A FAINT

THE ISLAND OF THE MARIONETTES. THE DEAF AND DUMB MARIONETTES. LOUD NOISES. THE EXTREMELY SOLEMN HORSEMEN. MELINDA WISHES TO WRITE: THREE MARIONETTES PREVENT HER. MELINDA IS FURIOUS. TWO MARIONETTES PICK UP THE CORPSE.

THE sounds grew louder and louder, and presently a procession appeared in sight. Some of the persons in this procession were on horseback, some on foot; all were gaily dressed and wore high-pointed, broad-brimmed hats. In some ways they resembled the Silent Beings, for the two countries were very closely connected, and it was the privilege of all good Marionettes to acquire voices and become Silent Beings themselves. That is to say that they became able to speak, and no longer wanted to do so, instead of being dumb and longing for a voice as they did when they were Marionettes.

BROAD-BRIMMED HATS

The Marionettes consoled themselves for being dumb by making tremendous noises with bells, whistles, trumpets, and drums, which they played

THEY DID NOT WANT HER TO WRITE

upon with shrill cries and clattering gestures. The more serious ones rode on wooden horses or geese, or simply on sticks, which had the head of a horse, lion, or goose at one end, and a little wheel at the other to run along the ground. These cavaliers were all extremely dignified and majestic.

Melinda tried to attract their attention by whistling through her fingers, but not a head in the procession turned at the sound. It was evident that they could not hear any more than they could speak. They might, however, be able to read, so she took a little piece of paper and a pencil out of her pocket and began to write on it, using the head of the fainting Marionette as a writing table.

The Marionettes, at that moment, caught sight of her, and three of them left the procession and came running towards her, solemnly waving their arms. It seemed as though they did not want her to write, and when she tried to go on, making signs that she would show them what she had written, one of the three dolls snatched the paper out of her hand, and tore it into tiny pieces. Tears of anger and fright came into Melinda's eyes ; she began to wish that she had not run away from reasonable, every-day people. She turned to look again for the passage on the hill by which she had come, but the hill was smooth and bare, and there was no trace of an opening. There was no escape that way ; she could only resolve to explore the country round in the hope of discovering some way of getting back to the Boatman and the Carpenter, who would be in a terrible state of anxiety at her disappearance.

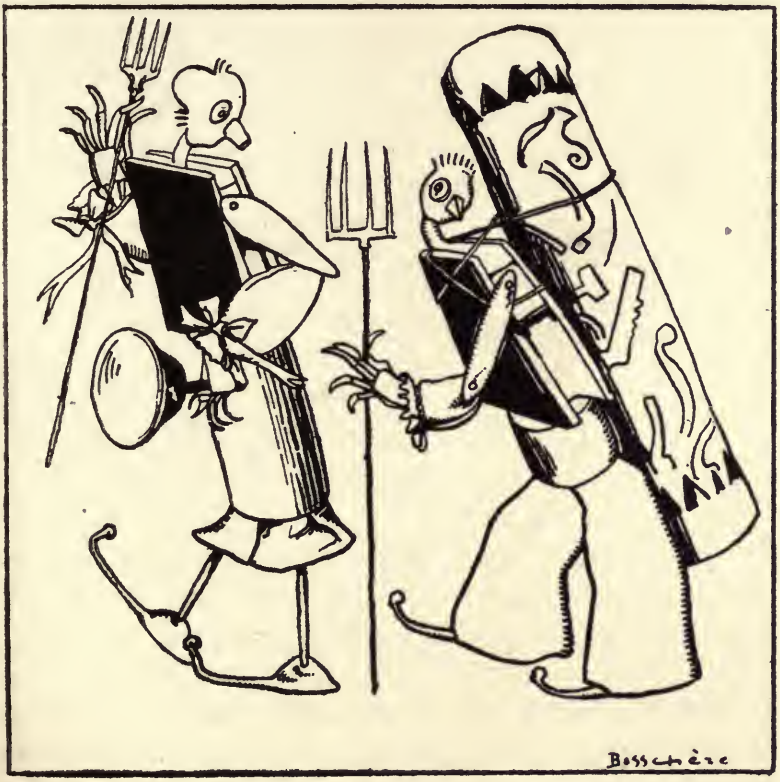
Before setting out she decided to mark the place where the tunnel had been in case it appeared again, so she took another piece of paper and attached it to a branch close at hand. Instantly a Marionette rushed up as before, snatched the paper and tore it up into

tiny pieces. Melinda stamped her foot with rage, and tried to hit the impertinent little things, but they dodged and twisted so quickly that there was no catching them, laughing all the time with their

THEY DODGED AND TWISTED SO QUICKLY

big mouths wide open. She did once succeed in snatching one of their hats off, but the Marionette who had lost it only laughed louder still, and took another hat out of one of his pockets. She stopped at last and sat down and cried like a little girl lost in a wood. She would not have despaired so much if she had known that Peter and the Friend and the Drummer were watching a theatrical performance quite near by.

While she was still crying, two more Marionettes came up carrying a long, narrow, cardboard box. One of them had a bell without a clapper, which he



TWO MORE MARIONETTES CAME UP

swung to and fro. When they came closer, Melinda saw that the box was covered with drawings and signs, which she thought must mean " Repairs and Decorations." There was a drawing of a hammer knocking in a nail and another of a brush painting

an eyebrow on a mask with black paint. She was not mistaken. The two Marionettes opened the box and took out two or three dolls tied together like a bundle of asparagus. Then they picked up the Marionette, who had once been a Silent Being, and tied him in with the others and put them all back in the box and shut the lid. They then picked it up and ran off with it, staring at Melinda as they went, but not as though they were surprised to see her.

A PLAY. MELINDA FINDS THE FRIEND, PETER, AND DRUM. THEATRE IN A PIT. ACTORS UNDER UMBRELLAS. THEY ACT BLUE-BEARD. MELINDA ADVISES THEM TO USE GLASS UMBRELLAS.

A FEW minutes later one of them came back, and to Melinda's joyful surprise he was leading the Friend by the hand. Melinda stopped crying and laughed for joy, but though the Friend embraced her very affectionately she did not say a word. She had grown accustomed to living in the country of dumb show and only speaking in the evenings when she was alone with Peter and the Drummer.

She led Melinda to a high wall close by and through a little door, which closed to behind them and Melinda found herself in a great round hall, which had no ceiling. Two rows of chairs were placed all the way round it, and just beyond the chairs the floor was sunk to a depth of about ten feet, so that the people

sitting in the chairs had to bend down to see what was happening below.

In the midst of a profound silence Melinda was

MELINDA STOPPED CRYING AND LAUGHED FOR JOY

shown to a seat near to Peter and the Drummer, who were both in the audience. Peter saluted her gravely, and took no further notice of her. He seemed quite absorbed in what was going on beneath him. The Drummer bowed and smiled, but he made a sign

HE SEEMED QUITE ABSORBED

that she must not make any disturbance by talking.

Melinda leant over in her chair and saw that a play was being acted; the actors looked like people in the street seen from a first floor window, their heads seemed enormous and their bodies very small. But it was quite easy to follow the action of the play by their gestures and by their bright clothes, and Melinda did not take long to guess that they were acting the play of "Bluebeard and His Seven Wives." The Marionettes sitting near her were moved to tears by the performance, and this as well as a light shower, which had begun to fall, made it necessary for the actors to put up umbrellas. Soon the tops of the umbrellas were all that could be seen from above, and the umbrellas were so large that the actors themselves could hardly see one another.

Each umbrella had a round spot of colour painted on it, and all the colours were different.

"That is an invention of Peter's," whispered the Friend in Melinda's ear. She was quite as proud of the invention as Peter himself, and Peter was as interested in the play as if he had been the author.

"What invention?" asked Melinda.

"The umbrellas, of course."

"But one can see nothing," said Melinda, impatiently.

"But Peter was careful to put a colour-sign on

every umbrella," continued the Friend with an admiring look at Peter.

"But what do the colour-signs mean?" asked Melinda, whispering so as not to disturb the others, whose attention was rivetted on the play.

"You need only look there," replied the Friend, and pointed to a row of figures painted on the wall of the sunken stage. These drawings represented the characters in the play, Bluebeard, the seven wives, Sister Anne, and the two brothers. Under each figure was painted a round spot of colour, and Melinda saw that these colour-signs corresponded with the ones on the umbrellas, so that the audience could tell which actor was playing under each umbrella.

Although the performance was certainly very original, Melinda found it too vague to please her. She leant across to Peter and remarked:

"You might, at least, have had the umbrellas made of glass so that one could see the actors.

Peter's face lit up, and he shook Melinda warmly by the hand.

"It is a magnificent suggestion!" he said," and I shall certainly make use of it."

This was the second time

PLAYING UNDER EACH UMBRELLA

152 ALL THAT COULD BE

SEEN FROM ABOVE

HURRIEDLY PICKED IT UP

that Melinda had assisted in an important undertaking. The first time was when she had proposed a visit to the terrible Island of Baligoors, where they had found and rescued Cod.

At this moment a large object fell at Drummer's feet, who hurriedly picked it up and hid it under his clothes. They had all seen that it was a Marionette's head, but said no word, as they did not know how far it might not be criminal to have the head of a Marionette in one's pocket.

THE MARIONETTES' FIRE. THEY SPEAK OF THE BALIGOORS. WHY MELINDA COULD NOT WRITE. THE SAILORS FEED THEIR FIRE WITH SLEEPING MARIONETTES.

WHEN the performance was over, the travellers left the hall in the midst of a crowd of Marionettes, but as soon as possible they managed to walk away together and congratulate each other on being together again.

Melinda told them how Flute had found a country which was entirely to his satisfaction.

" And the Captain ? " asked the Drummer.

" Who do you mean ? " said Melinda.

" The master of the Blueboat, who floated away in a barrel, of course," said the Drummer.

" He is with Flute and Cod and the Carpenter in the Island of Silence," replied Melinda. " The Carpenter, too, is well, and so is Cod except that the Baligoors stole his pretty fish costume and he has nothing to wear except a warm, brown cloak ! "

" Who are the Baligoors," asked everyone at once, and so Melinda had to tell them the story the reader has already been told in the preceding chapters of this truthful history. None of them had seen anything of the fight between the Carpenter and the Black Cavalier.

" At that time we must have been on the Island of Long Women," said the Drummer, and then it was Melinda's turn to ask questions.

" Bing and Sun-and-Moon are still there," said the Friend in a disgusted voice. Melinda felt a little ashamed of not having asked for news of them before, but as it seemed to be a sore subject for the others she did not ask for more information, but simply said " Ah ! " and changed the subject.

" The Marionettes on this Island," she began rather angrily, " have no manners at all. Twice when I wanted to write they snatched away the paper and tore it into tiny pieces."

" That is not surprising," said Peter, laughing at her cross little voice. " Anything written makes them remember a terrible tragedy that was the end

A Post on the Beach

of some of their comrades, and they regard all writing as a danger. We have to hide our notebooks and pencils, and even hide ourselves when we want to write our diaries."

Peter said "*our* diaries," but, as a matter of fact, he was the only one who troubled to take notes on his journey.

"Do you know anything about the tragedy?" asked Melinda.

"I know more or less what happened," said Peter. "One of the Marionettes on horseback told me about it by signs, and I understood pretty well. One day, a long time ago, the Marionettes found a shipwrecked mariner, cast up by the sea on the shore of their Island. They treated him with great kindness and consideration, fed him well, and gave him a nice suit of Marionette clothes. After a while, however, he wanted to return to his own country, so he set up a post on the beach with a piece of white paper pinned on to it for a signal. Soon afterwards the signal was noticed by a passing ship, which landed on the Island and carried him away. But before he went he wrote a message on the paper, the first writing the Marionettes had ever seen, very likely nothing more than a message of gratitude and farewell.

STUPID SAILOR-MEN

"One night, a little while afterwards, an old Marionette, fishing on the rocks by moonlight, saw a party of men land their boat on the beach near to where the paper was still fluttering on the post. It seems that the strange men went up to it and read it, and saw that the man who wrote it had been rescued. Then they started to make a fire, and as there was not much wood to be found, they picked up some Marionettes who were peacefully sleeping under some trees close by, and tossed them into the flames to make the fire burn more brightly. They were only stupid sailor-men, and could not imagine that a Marionette might have feelings. They thought the Marionettes were only cast-off toys, and they built the fire high up, making it sparkle and crackle, while they sat round it, laughing and talking.

"And now nothing will convince the Marionettes that the castaway had not left a written order for those men to burn their brothers and sisters, for it

was directly after reading the paper that they committed the dreadful crime of throwing noble Marionettes into the fire."

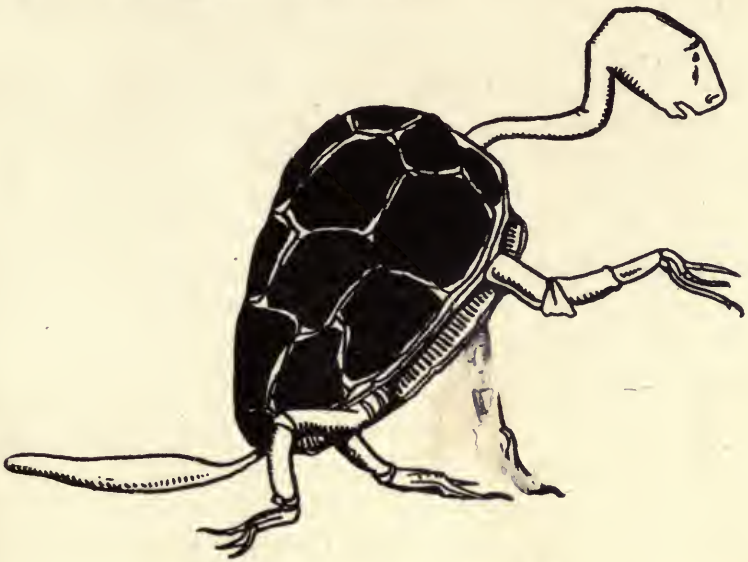
ALL THE TRAVELLERS RE-UNITE. THE CARPENTER WITH THE AEROPLANE FINDS MELINDA. THEY RETURN TO THE ISLAND OF SILENCE. FLUTE BEGINS THE CONCERT. THE VIOLIN ACCOMPANIED BY THE MANDOLINE. THE SEA MURMURS ALONE IN THE DISTANCE.

"THEN, of course, I can understand their terror at seeing me write," said Melinda. "But they might have seen that I wasn't a bit like those stupid, cruel sailors."

"But we are not judged very kindly on these Islands, dear Melinda," said a voice at her elbow. She looked round, and saw that it was the Carpenter, who had come to look for her in his aeroplane. "Remember what the Tortoise with the long paws said about you on the Island of the Baligoors," went on the Carpenter in a winning voice.

Melinda shook her two fists at him for reminding her of the tortoise, who had said in such a shameless way that she was the only one of them who looked as cruel as the Baligoors. She was very pleased to see the Carpenter again, however, and the others greeted him like a long-lost brother, for although they had only known him for a very short time, and his

journey with them had been almost an accident, they had all become quite attached to him, because he was so gentle and good-tempered.



TORTOISE WITH THE LONG PAWS

They wanted to show Melinda and the Carpenter all the wonderful things that could be seen in the country of Marionettes, but the Carpenter, who was growing wiser and wiser with experience, insisted that they should hurry back to the Island of Silence while the daylight lasted. So he and Melinda flew off in the aeroplane. The other three embarked in their half-boat, which they had learnt to manage very cleverly, and steered it towards the spot where they saw the aeroplane descend.

It was a lovely night when they all arrived on the

Island of Silence. They sat in a row on the beach facing the sea, and supped together on bread and fruit, and watched the stars overhead.

There were now eight of them together again, because they sat so near Flute that he became one of the party, and could hear their conversation. In spite of his vows, he must have felt a great curiosity about his friends' adventures. They were too tired to talk very much, however, but just sat quietly, listening to the sound of the waves, and the nightingale that was singing.

Presently Flute began to play on his sad clarionet, for his vows did not forbid music. The nightingale at once stopped her song and flew away to bed.

Flute's tune was very melancholy, so Melinda began to beat a gay dance on her little drum as a protest, and the Drummer followed suit. Then everyone began to play, and as you may remember they had not brought their conductor with them, everyone played a different tune. They were very clever musicians. The Carpenter, whose knowledge of music was confined to the one lesson Melinda had given him in the palm tree on the Round Island, could not pretend to understand their music, so he said nothing for fear of appearing ignorant. The only part he really liked was the sweet song Peter played on his violin, accompanied by the Friend on her weeping mandoline.

THEIR CONDUCTOR

By the time the concert was ended the moon had risen, and the moonlight threw delicate green and

PETER PLAYED ON HIS VIOLIN

silver reflections on the bright costumes of the musicians. Even Cod looked beautiful for Melinda

had fastened a little garland of flowers on the warm, brown cloak, which was all he had to wear.

They spent the rest of the night recounting to each other all their separate adventures. Peter began, his voice whispering through the air like a breeze.

THE ISLAND OF LONG WOMEN. BING AND SUN-AND-MOON. THEY MEET TWO OF THE TRAVELLERS AGAIN. THE LENGTH OF THESE TWO. FIVE CAST-AWAYS LAND ON THE ISLAND OF LONG WOMEN. DESCRIPTION OF THE WOMEN AND MEN OF THE ISLAND

"NONE of you will have forgotten the flock of whales, whose gambols separated us, as we set out from the wreck of the Blue Boat," he began. "When the whale, who was playing with our half-boat grew tired of his game, we found ourselves quite close to an island. The sea was calm by then, and we were drifting gently towards the land, when we suddenly became aware that our friends, Bing and Sun-and-Moon, were getting into difficulties. The whale, who had been following them, was still playing delightedly with their two barrels joined by a rope. She was a very gentle creature like all whales, and had done them no harm so far, but all of a sudden she took it into her head to dive under the rope, so that when she came up again she lifted the barrels clean out of the water, one on each side of her back, like a donkey carrying baskets. The

LIKE A DONKEY CARRYING BASKETS

whale seemed quite unconscious of her burden, and they did not dare to cry out, for fear she should be frightened and dive under the water with them, but when they happened to pass close by our boat, Bing began playing very softly on his castanets, and Sun-and-Moon on his bag-pipes. We did not particularly want to attract the whale's attention, so the Drummer stood up, and, taking out his knife, made a dumb show of cutting a rope with it. Sun-and-Moon, who is simply a lunatic, could think of nothing but the splendid adventure of riding in a barrel on the back of a whale, and, as he told us afterwards, he was comparing his immediate impressions with those of his childhood when he had ridden on an elephant at the Zoo. He must have decided that his present experience was the more wonderful of the two, for nothing could distract him, and he had wisely confided his destinies to Bing, who was more practical.

Bing understood the Drummer's signs at once, and cut the rope that held the two barrels together, so that they slipped down the sides of the whale into the water. The whale noticed nothing, and swam steadily away, her mind occupied, no doubt, with pleasant memories. We hastened to rescue Bing and Sun-and-Moon. I was never so struck by the extraordinary length of our two friends, as when they came out of their barrels ; they seemed endless, like macaroni.

There were now five of us on the half-boat, and we only just managed to keep our balance. Fortunately the current was driving us steadily towards the

THE EXTRAORDINARY LENGTH OF OUR TWO FRIENDS

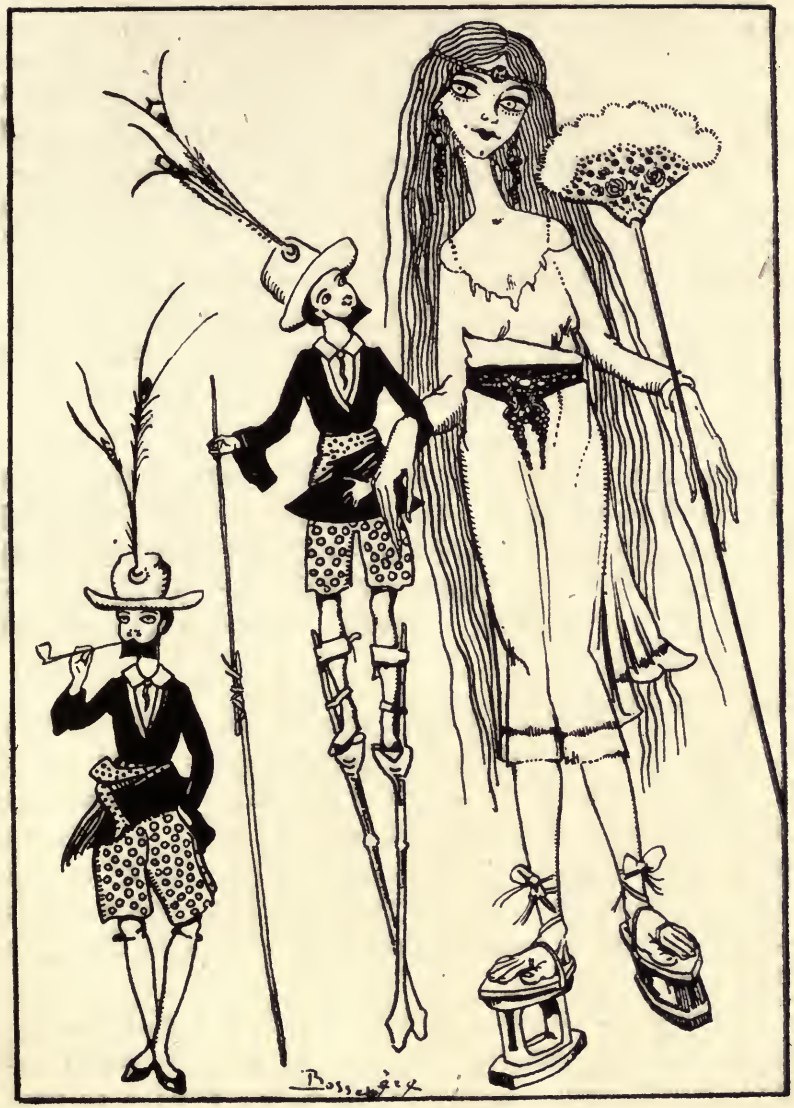
land, and very soon we felt the keel scraping over sand. We jumped out and pulled the boat to shore.

We were immediately surrounded by a crowd of strange people, who were evidently the inhabitants of the Island. They seemed pleasant people, and were not bad-looking, though very thin, except that the women had enormous feet.

The women were, in fact, altogether gigantic, taller even than Bing and Sun-and-Moon. They wore huge earrings, half hidden by their hair, which was very thick and quite straight and reached down to their knees. Their wide belts were ornamented to match their earrings. Their noses turned up a little at the end, and their mouths were too large, but they had long, graceful necks and pretty dimples, and their hands were long and shapely.

They wore short, simple dresses and sandals mounted on wooden clogs, it is difficult to guess why, unless it was to make them look still taller.

They were gentle creatures, except when they thought fit to lose their tempers, but they were altogether a great deal too big ; and the worst of it was that the men were unusually small, much smaller than I am. They, too, were very gentle, and they had nice little round heads, neatly finished with a little square beard and a moustache as small and round as a farthing. They had small feet, and their costume consisted of a very wide sash and a round hat and neat little shoes. When they went for walks with the ladies they made themselves taller by hoisting themselves on stilts.



HOISTING THEMSELVES ON STILTS

"The Island itself was very lovely . . ."

"Horrible you mean!" interrupted the Friend.

"Very well, then, I will tell my story without comment," said Peter. "The others will be able to judge afterwards what sort of Island it was."

"You know perfectly well that it was horrible," the Friend persisted. She had begun to brush Peter's clothes with a little ivory brush as she spoke.

"Oh, do let me go on!" said Peter.

"Well, then, try to be truthful," snapped the Friend.

TWO MARRIAGES. A BANQUET. THE TWO BETROTHED LONG GIRLS. THE FRIEND IS ANGRY. DELEGATION OF PATRIARCHS AND AMBASSADORS. THE CHARIOTS. BING AND SUN-AND-MOON REPLY.

"VERY well, then," continued Peter, "everyone on the Island seemed pleased to see us. It was obvious that the Long Women were most attracted by Sun-and-Moon, who is thin and long, and Bing, who is long and stout. They did not have to bend their heads very much to talk to them, and they had to bend right down to talk to their own menfolk.

"They welcomed us with great hospitality and a gorgeous banquet was held in our honour. Two little men stood, one on each side of the Friend to serve her. They stood because if they had been seated they

would have been too small. Four Long Women served the rest of us out of silver dishes. One of them, a pretty girl with bright eyes, seemed to have fallen in love with Bing. The poor dear had evidently noticed that her feet were much larger than his, for she had put on a long skirt and taken off her clogs, to try and hide them. It was touching to see how much she admired Bing for being so stout and tall. As I have said, she was quite pretty. . . ."

"Pretty! No!" interrupted the Friend again. "Not even if she had tied back her carroty hair, and not allowed it to fly about all over the place!"

"Sun-and-Moon," Peter went on in his gentle fly-like voice, "was no less admired. A dark girl only a head or so taller than himself, began to worship him as soon as she set eyes on him. When he played on the bag-pipes

SUN-AND-MOON

after the banquet she fainted right away, so intense was her admiration.

" Another of them stationed herself beside the Drummer, but he began to beat on his drum with all his might, and made such a horrible noise that he scared her away, and made everyone else extremely uncomfortable."

An enormous Skinny Doll

" It was the only way to get rid of her," said the Drummer. " She looked like an enormous skinny doll."

" She was quite pretty you must admit," said Peter.

" A great monkey ! " said the Drummer, crossly.

" I myself—" Peter began again.

" Be quiet ! " cried the Friend. " You had another silly doll to look after you. She was all pink, except her flaxen hair. A stupid, nonsensical puppet ! "

" Perhaps you will go on with the story, dear Friend," said Peter indulgently. But the Friend shook her head and kissed him on the forehead, while she stroked his hair. She had a heart of gold, and she was very seldom cross.

" You may have guessed what happened," Peter went on, " according to the custom of the Island of Long Women, next day Bing and Sun-and-Moon were ceremoniously sought in marriage.

" A delegation arrived at the door of the

house which had been lent us. They came in big low chariots, very comfortably arranged, with books and elegant provisions, chess boards, and even billiard tables. You see the delegation had to wait for a reply from Bing and Sun-and-Moon, and according to the custom of the country they were given two days to consider it. The two girls came as well, both on the same chariot, magnificently dressed and covered with flowers.

" When the foremost chariot drew up at our door a hundred little dancers immediately jumped out of it and began to perform a marvellous and complicated ballet, to the accompaniment of music played by a hundred musicians, who came in the second chariot.

" When this was over, more chariots arrived with people carrying symbolic banners. These people formed themselves into two ranks, between which the oldest and wisest men in the country came forward to meet us. The old men made signs, which we could not understand, and then bowed low in salutation and remained bent almost double as though they were playing honey pots. It was quite painful to watch them, for they refused absolutely to get up. Presently some of the younger men came and held them up, or they would have fallen over."

Everyone looked at Bing and Sun-and-Moon, who thought they were to reply at once to the proposals that had been made to them, so they both said " Yes ! We will," as loudly as they could. But still the old men did not get up, and someone

THE FOREMOST CHARIOT

DREW UP AT OUR DOOR

explained to them that they must approach and kneel on the ground so that they could look into the faces of the old men, and state their names and positions.

BOWED LOW IN SALUTATION

Bing was first.

"I am Bing," he said. "I generally live in London. I play on the castanets, and sometimes wear a mask. I was wrecked in the Blue Boat and that is how I find myself on this Island."

Then it was the turn of Sun-and-Moon.

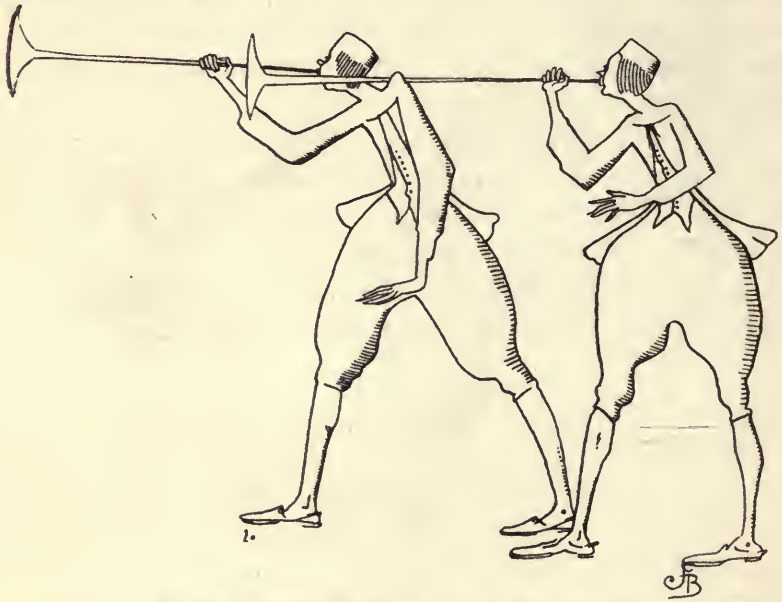
"I am Sun-and-Moon," he announced. "I am the most eminent poet and player on the bagpipes

DANCING AND MUSIC STARTED AGAIN

in London, and I have many more titles besides. I was wrecked in the Blue Boat with Bing, and that is how I find myself on this Island."

Then they were asked to decide before the sun

set on the following day, whether or no they would accept the two girls in marriage. The old men stood up again and gave them each a sheet of purple silk, fringed with gold, on which they were to write their



BLEW LOUDLY ON THEIR SILVER TRUMPETS

answer. Then the dancing and music started again, and the old men retired to their chariots, leaving two heralds, dressed in green, with silver trumpets, standing at the door of our house. The chariots stayed near by, and the people in them were as comfortable as though they had been at home. It was like a big camp, with a crowd of holiday-makers.

Bing and Sun-and-Moon asked us for our advice, but the Friend and I refused to have anything to do

in the matter. You see, we knew quite well that nothing we could say would prevent them from marrying the pretty Long Women.

We were right; they wrote "Yes!" in large letters on the purple silk, and signed their names, though they knew that their consent would prevent them from ever leaving the Island again.

When the green heralds saw their answer, they blew loudly on their silver trumpets and everyone rejoiced. The two girls shed tears of happiness. The Friend and the Drummer were invited to the wedding festivities with great ceremony. I myself was asked to stay in the house a little while longer.

PETER REFUSES. MORE CEREMONIES. THE FAIR GIRL TEARS HER HAIR. PETER REFUSES AND WARNS HIS FRIENDS. THEY LEAVE THE ISLAND AND THE FEAST CONTINUES.

"BEFORE long I knew the reason for this curious demand. Scarcely was one set of chariots out of sight than another procession arrived at the door, and the whole ceremony started again. This time it was I who received a proposal of marriage.

"It appeared that a very pretty girl with golden hair had fallen in love with me!"

The Friend flushed angrily at the memory of this incident, but she did not interrupt, so Peter smiled and went on.

TEARING HER GOLDEN HAIR

"I was given the customary two days for reflection, but it did not take me long to decide. I did not want to marry a strange woman, and live for the rest of my life in a country so different from my own, so I lost no time in finding out how I could politely refuse the offer. I discovered that the custom was simple enough; a native of the country could refuse if he liked, but the only alternative for a stranger was to leave the Island altogether.

"It took me so long to discover what I ought to do that the girl grew impatient and sent a messenger for my answer, regardless of all social rules. I sent him back with my polite excuses, saying that, as I had an engagement to sing in an opera, and she could not leave the Island, it would be impossible for us to marry.

"When she heard this she became furious with anger, and stood up in her chariot

screaming and tearing her golden hair and flinging away her flowers and jewels. The sight of her temper made me fearful for the safety of Bing and Sun-and-Moon, but they are bigger than most people, so I dare say they will be able to take care of themselves.

" I managed to send a message to the other two, and they escaped from the wedding festivities as soon as they could. The Friend came, holding a pear in one hand, and seven pretty fans in the other. Then we took flight as quickly as possible, for it seemed unsafe to stay longer on an Island where the women indulged in such sudden fits of rage.

" We found some pieces of wood for oars, and launched our half-boat successfully in a river not far from the sea. Fountains were beginning to play, and fireworks were being lit in honour of the wedding as we rowed hurriedly down the river. There was also a torchlight procession, but as it was still broad daylight, the torches had not been lit. Here is one of the flowers the girl threw at me in her temper."

He held out a big red flower for them to see.

" After some tossing at sea," he went on, " we succeeded in landing on the Island where you found us. I had counted on reforming the theatre there," he added thoughtfully, " but now I think it would be more interesting to produce the effects I have discovered here at a good theatre in London."

THE CASTAWAYS THINK OF THE FUTURE. THEY RECOGNIZE THE ISLANDS. AN ISLAND WITHOUT A SINGLE TREE. INTELLIGENT MEN. THEY SET OUT FOR ANOTHER ISLAND.

IN spite of their frivolity, the time had come when the travellers had to stop and think about the future. Their uncertain situation would not have troubled them at all if they had been sure that a good big boat was coming to take them back to London in time for the opera season. As things were, however, there did not seem to be any way for them to return home. The petrol in the aeroplane was getting so low that there was barely enough left for a short stroll in the air round the Islands ; certainly not enough for the long voyage back to London. And the Carpenter was wise enough to refuse to make use of what there was except for real and urgent reasons.

There was nothing to prevent them from staying on the Island of Silence. It was very quiet and pleasant and an ideal place for concerts, but somehow they could not decide to stay in the same place for the rest of their lives, and when the night was over and dawn began to appear in the sky, they were still sitting in a row on the shore, gazing expectantly at the horizon.

As the sun rose and the light grew stronger, they could see the other Islands dotted about on the water, some near, some far away, some that they knew by sight, and some they did not recognise.

One of them had caught the first rays of the sun, and stood out more distinctly than the rest. It was especially noticeable, too, on account of its queer shape. It was almost as high as it was broad, and as

A Good Big Boat

the daylight grew they saw that it was bare and rocky and that its outline formed a series of right angles. There did not seem to be a single tree.

At times like this the vows of the Silent Beings became very inconvenient. If only they could have spoken they could have explained all that the travellers wanted to know about the strange Island. It was still more unfortunate that the Boatman had lost his lacquer box, for it had contained a telescope, which would have been very useful just then.

"It looks as though it had been built up with blocks all the same size, like the ones they sell in

BUILT UP WITH BLOCKS

toy-shops," said the Drummer, who had good eyesight.

" It may be a mirage," suggested Cod, sleepily. Cod was so lazy that he was never quite awake whatever happened.

" If it is a mirage it will soon disappear," said Peter.

" I agree with the Drummer that it looks as though someone built it," said the Carpenter. " And if so," he added, " there must be civilised people on it. Everyone nodded agreement except Cod, who had gone to sleep again.

" Then we had better try and get there," said the Carpenter. " If it is civilised we shall be able to find out where we are, and what is the best way to get back to London." It was astonishing how wise and courageous the Carpenter had become, since he had set out to buy an instrument in a shop. Travelling develops the reason ; all of them, including even Cod, were more serious and prudent than when they had taken their mad departure in the Blue Boat.

" Then you will not refuse, dear Carpenter, to go over there in your aeroplane, and find out if the people will receive us with hospitality ? " pleaded Peter in his soft little voice.

" It looks so far, I am afraid I have not enough petrol to go there and back again," faltered the Carpenter.

" Well let us all go without being announced," said everyone at once. And that is what they did.

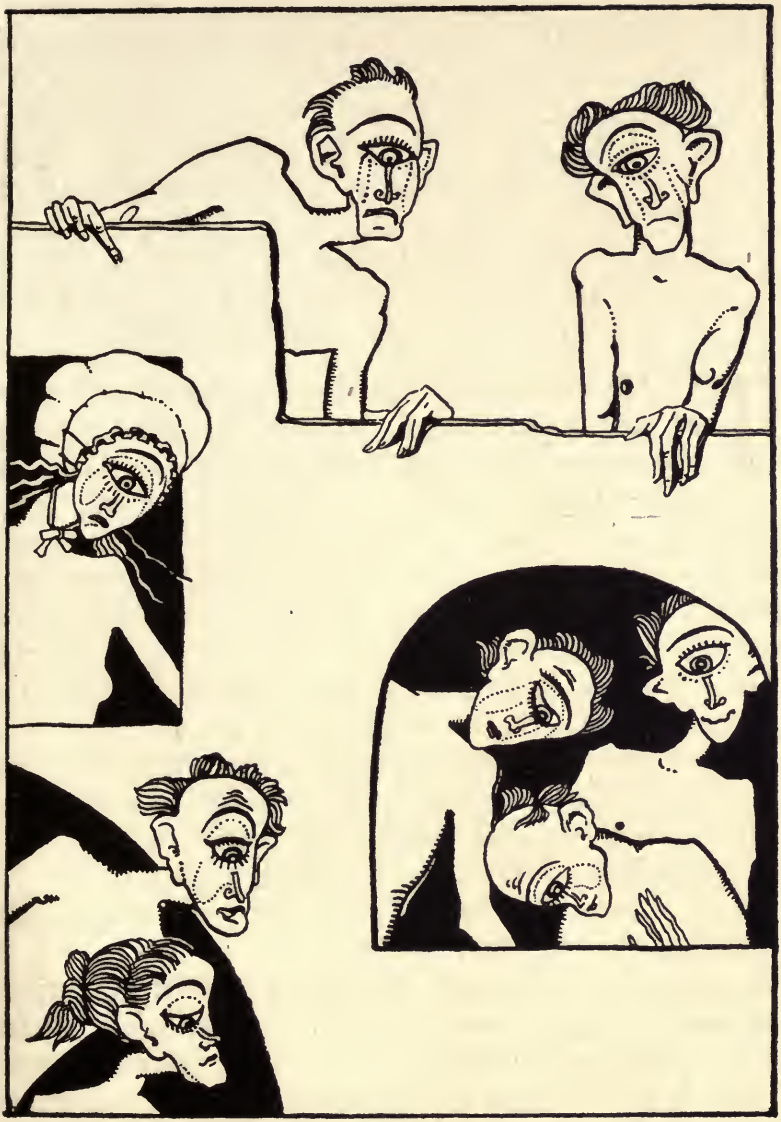
THE BUILDER'S ISLAND. THE WRECK AND THE AEROPLANE LEAVE THE ISLAND OF LONG WOMEN. FLUTE HAS REFUSED TO ACCOMPANY HIS FRIENDS. DESCRIPTION OF THE BUILDER'S ISLAND. THE CYCLOPS. THEY GO UP A STAIRCASE, AND MELINDA ASCENDS IN A BASKET. THE AEROPLANE IS DRAWN UP TO THE TOP OF THE ISLAND.

THEY loaded the half-boat with all their possessions, and begged some fruit and a pitcher of water from the birds as provisions in case the strange Island was not civilised after all. The aeroplane was folded up and packed with the other things, as it was only to be used in case of emergency. Melinda had unfortunately lost the magic diamond in the dark tunnel, which had led her to the country of Marionettes, so the Carpenter could not make the aeroplane small enough to go in his pocket.

Before starting they begged Flute earnestly to come with them, but he obstinately refused to listen to their pleading and advice. He merely nodded his head twice and then shook it, which meant :

" I shall live here for the rest of my days," and no doubt he is living there still.

So they had to launch the half-boat without him, and they rowed so hard with the branches they had cut for oars that presently they were quite close to the tall Island. It was a very strange place. In all their travels they had never seen anything like it before.



STRANGE-LOOKING CREATURES

The whole Island was one enormous town, and the houses had been built one on top of another, until some of them were so high in the air that they looked as though they would topple over into the sea. The building must have gone on for hundreds of years, so that when all the space on the ground had been used up the builders had gone on building upwards towards the sky, laying the foundations of new houses on the roofs of the old ones. The lower houses seemed to be quite empty, like shells left on the beach when the fishes that lived inside them are dead. Only the upper houses were inhabited, as though the builders lost interest in what was completed and only wanted to go on and build more.

At first the voyagers could see no sign of life at all, but presently they saw people leaning out of the upper windows and over unfinished walls. They were strange-looking creatures, for they had only one eye, which was placed in the middle of their foreheads.

"We are not safe after all," said Melinda tearfully. "Even the Baligoors had two eyes in their heads like other reasonable people."

"All the same, they must be very intelligent and civilised to have built all these houses," Peter reminded her.

Meanwhile more and more of the Cyclops, as the one-eyed builders were called, appeared at the windows of their houses to gaze at the new-comers. It was quite uncomfortable to be stared at by so many people with only one eye, and there seemed to

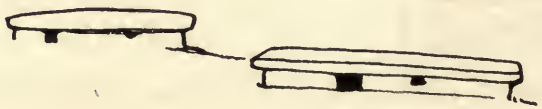
be no way of explaining why they had come or asking for help. But presently a little door opened near to the spot where the boat was lying, and one of the

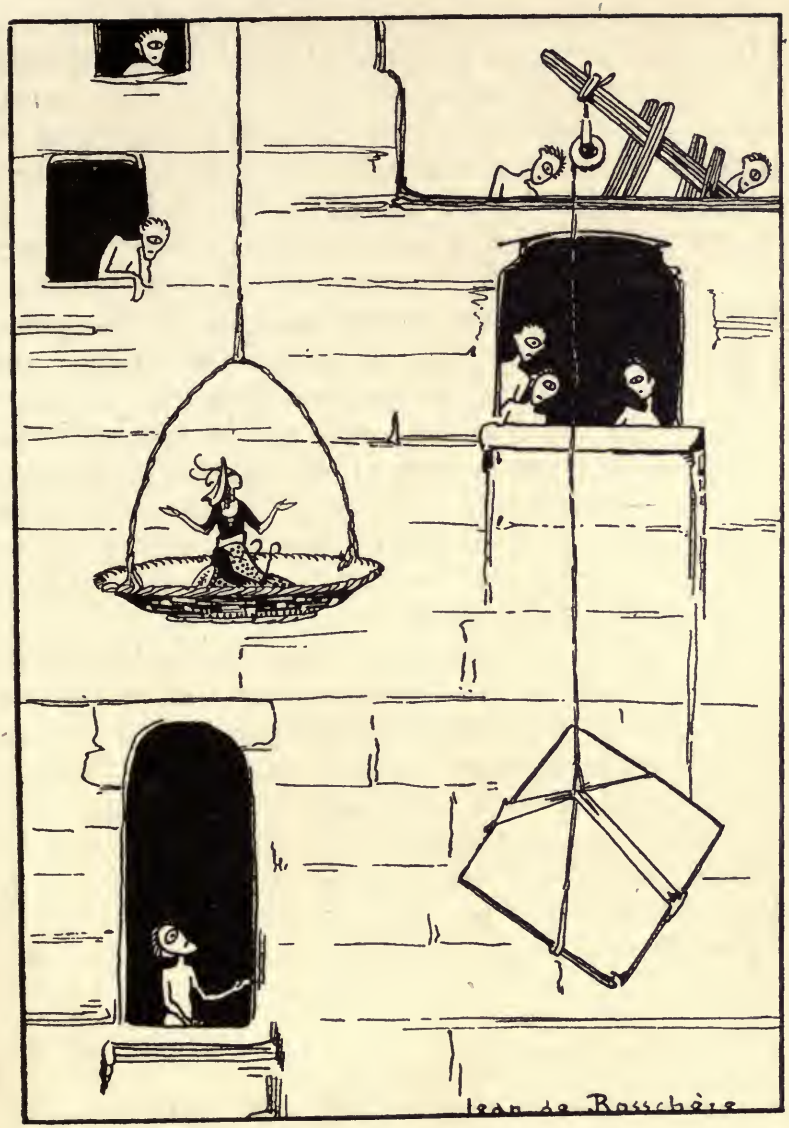
To gaze at the New-comers

Cyclops appeared in the door-way. Just behind him they could see the beginning of a stair inside a high tower, which seemed to lead to the top of the whole construction. There were many of these towers, and evidently each contained a staircase, but this was

not the only way of reaching the upper houses, for at the same moment that the little door was opened they saw a basket being let down by a crane from above. The basket was lowered until it was close to the boat, and then the Cyclops invited the travellers to ascend, either by the basket or the staircase, as it pleased them. Melinda, who loved travelling by air, chose the basket. She stepped into it, and immediately it was pulled up to the summit. At the same time the Drummer, the Boatman and Cod, and Peter and the Friend began mounting the staircase one after the other at the heels of the Cyclop, who turned round at every turn of the stairs to make sure that they were really following. He seemed quite feverish with surprise and excitement. Peter suspected treachery, and indeed none of them felt at their ease about the future.

The Carpenter, who had stayed behind to fasten the boat, signed to the Cyclops above that he wanted to send up the box which held the aeroplane, for he did not think it would be safe to leave it behind. The Cyclops seemed to understand his signs, for they sent down multitudes of cords with which he fastened the box as securely as he could. It was at once drawn upwards, and the basket, which had carried Melinda, was let down again for the Carpenter.





IT WAS AT ONCE DRAWN UPWARDS

THE POWER OF MUSIC. THE TRAVELLERS ARE COLDLY RECEIVED. THEY PLAY SOME MUSIC. THE CYCLOPS ARE CHARMED. THEY EXAMINE THE INSTRUMENTS. PETER PLAYS THE VIOLIN. A STRANGE NOISE IS HEARD AROUND THEM. THE NOISE STOPS

THEY found themselves on a sort of terrace at the very summit of the houses. They were surrounded by a crowd of Cyclops, who gazed at them silently, their one-eyes bright with interest. The Cyclops seemed to find it amusing and grotesque that the strangers had two eyes in their faces instead of one, but their brightly coloured clothes evidently excited envy and admiration. Presently the Cyclops began to ask them questions, who they were, where they had come from, and what adventures they had had on the way. But the travellers felt much too tired and shy to answer questions, and Melinda and the Friend were praying for the darkness to come quickly : they felt so embarrassed and frightened at being gazed at by a crowd of people with only one eye. Curiosity in two eyes is quite an ordinary thing !

The Cyclops were crowding very near ; they seemed to be on guard. There was a long and trying silence.

" Shall we have some music ? "

" That might, perhaps, distract their immoderate curiosity," said Peter, and as he had not yet spoken

his shrill little voice came as a new surprise to the Cyclops.

The musicians tuned up their instruments and began to play. The Cyclops were immediately prostrated with surprise and fear. They bowed their heads, and no one moved or spoke. If one of them had lifted his head a little you could have seen that his eye was full of terror and veneration.

The musicians, feeling more at ease, produced some wonderful music. They played on for a long time in the gathering dusk that deepened to a moonless night.

When at last they stopped, the Cyclops picked themselves up and crouched round them once more. The charm exercised on them by the music was broken. They came and asked to inspect the musical instruments, and took them very carefully in their hands. The Carpenter's saw pleased them most; wood was unknown to them, and they had never seen such a thing before. Their buildings were made partly of iron and partly of enormous bricks, so big and heavy that it took two men to carry them.

Melinda's little drum, and the Drummer's big one, seemed to the Cyclops very mysterious arrangements, and as for Melinda's lyre, Peter's violin, and the Friend's mandoline, they scarcely dared to touch them at all. The Boatman's pipe, and Cod's little flute, escaped notice, but they touched the musicians' garments with curious fingers, and looked hard at their two eyes. And all this time the Cyclops said nothing at all friendly or sympathetic.

Far away in the distance below them they could hear the sea peacefully murmuring, but the night was very dark and the crowd of Cyclops came closer

MELINDA'S LITTLE DRUM AND THE DRUMMER'S BIG ONE

and closer. There must have been more than a thousand of them.

Peter had a bright idea.

He drew several high notes from his violin, and

the Cyclops immediately drew away to allow room for prostrating themselves. It was too dark to see how far they were, but their voices sounded far away in the distance.

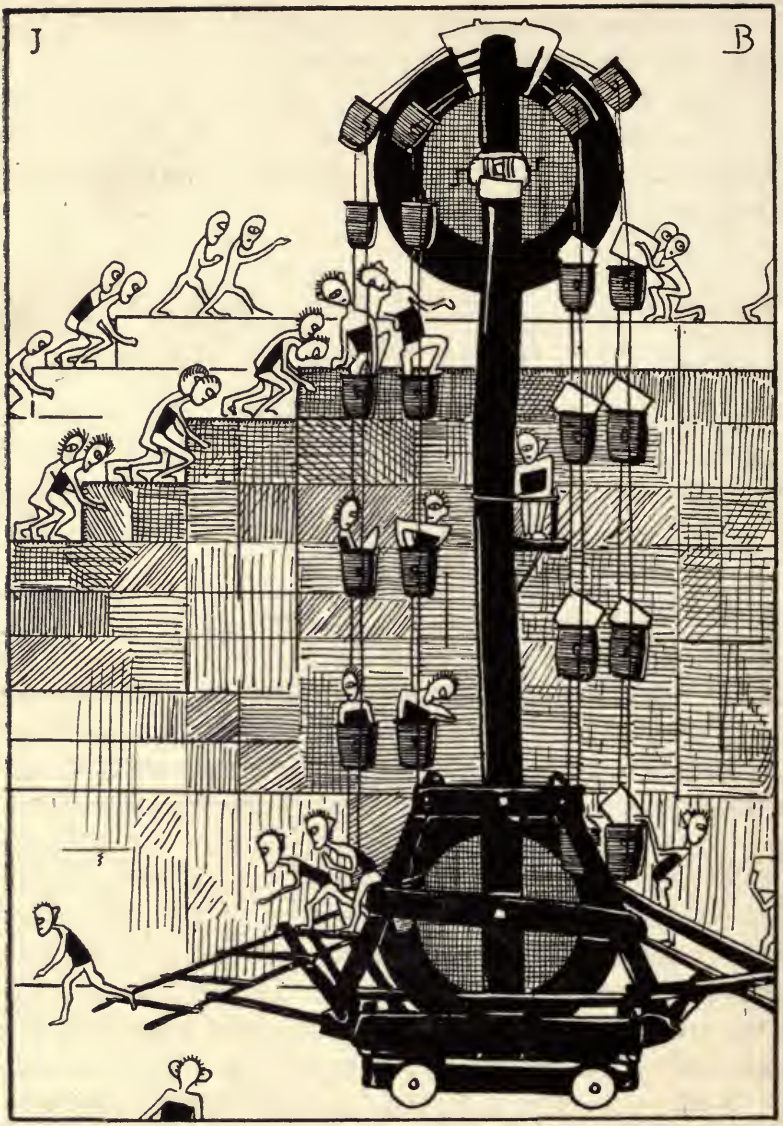
The other musicians followed Peter's example, and went on playing and playing, as this seemed the only way of keeping the indiscreet and unamiable creatures at a distance.

THE CYCLOPS IMMEDIATELY DREW AWAY

It is terrible to think of their piteous plight, unable to take a moment's rest, and with no refreshment of any kind.

Whenever they played softly they heard strange noises going on around them ; there could not have been more noise if the tower of Babel were being built again in a single night. It was clear that the Cyclops were trying to deaden the sound of the music by the noise of their work, but it would have taken much more noise than that to drown the music the musicians were playing.

It was so dark that they could not guess what it was that the Cyclops were building, but it seemed to them that the mysterious noises were growing upwards all round them.



THE CYCLOPS WERE BUILDING

" It seems to me that the sky is lighter," said Peter, as they paused for a moment to rest.

" The dawn is appearing," said the Boatman.

" The noise seems to have stopped," said the Drummer. They were just able to see each other through the dispersing darkness.

PRISONERS! THEY ARE SURROUNDED BY A HIGH WALL. THEY MUST DIE OF HUNGER OR LIVE LIKE BEARS IN A PIT. THEY HEAR AN ENGINE. THE " LEMON OF GOLD " REAPPEARS. IT DRAWS THE PRISONERS FROM THE PIT. THEY REACH KENSINGTON GARDENS.

IT was true; the noise had changed to a complete silence. It must have been because the Cyclops had gone to rest, and were in a deep sleep after their great efforts.

" I feel caged like a prisoner," said Peter, in a melancholy voice to Cod, who was sitting next to him.

" I feel dreadfully home-sick," said the Friend, and Melinda was nearly crying.

" Whatever happens we must get away from these heartless creatures," said the Drummer. " They seem to have the same sort of curiosity about us as collectors have for the insects they catch."

" I like insects," said the Carpenter rather crossly. " I collect them myself."

"But look!" cried the Boatman, in a voice full of disagreeable surprise. "Look! There is only a small circle of sky above us!"

They looked and saw that there was only a small round disc of pale blue above their heads. The open

In a Deep Sleep

sky, which had been all round them the night before, had gone. This was in no way surprising, for they were now surrounded by an immense wall, which the Cyclops had built round them in the night. A thousand of them had worked all night long in couples carrying their enormous bricks to make a cage for the seven musicians. That was why there

had been so much noise in the night, and why the Cyclops were sleeping off their fatigue now their work was done. The musicians were out of reach of the world, at the bottom of a sort of well.

" They will starve us to death," said the Boatman, weeping.

" No, they will keep us alive by throwing down buns to us, as though we were brown bears at the Zoo."

" They want us for their pleasure. Our music has enchanted them ; they will keep us alive to give them concerts," said the Drummer.

" They have made themselves comfortable seats at the top of the wall so that they can listen to us at their ease," said Cod, pointing upwards.

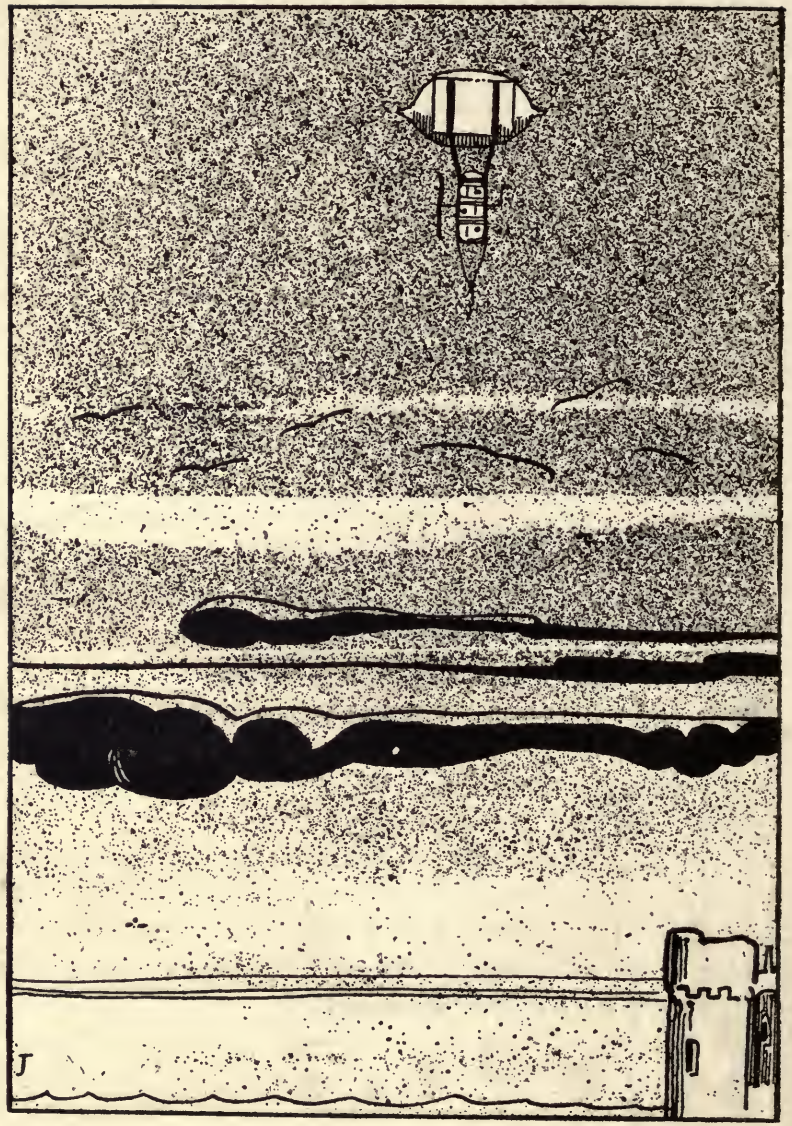
The sun rose higher in the sky, and soon it was broad day, but there was still no sound from the Cyclops. None of the musicians, not even the Boatman, had the heart to cry.

Not a sound. . . .

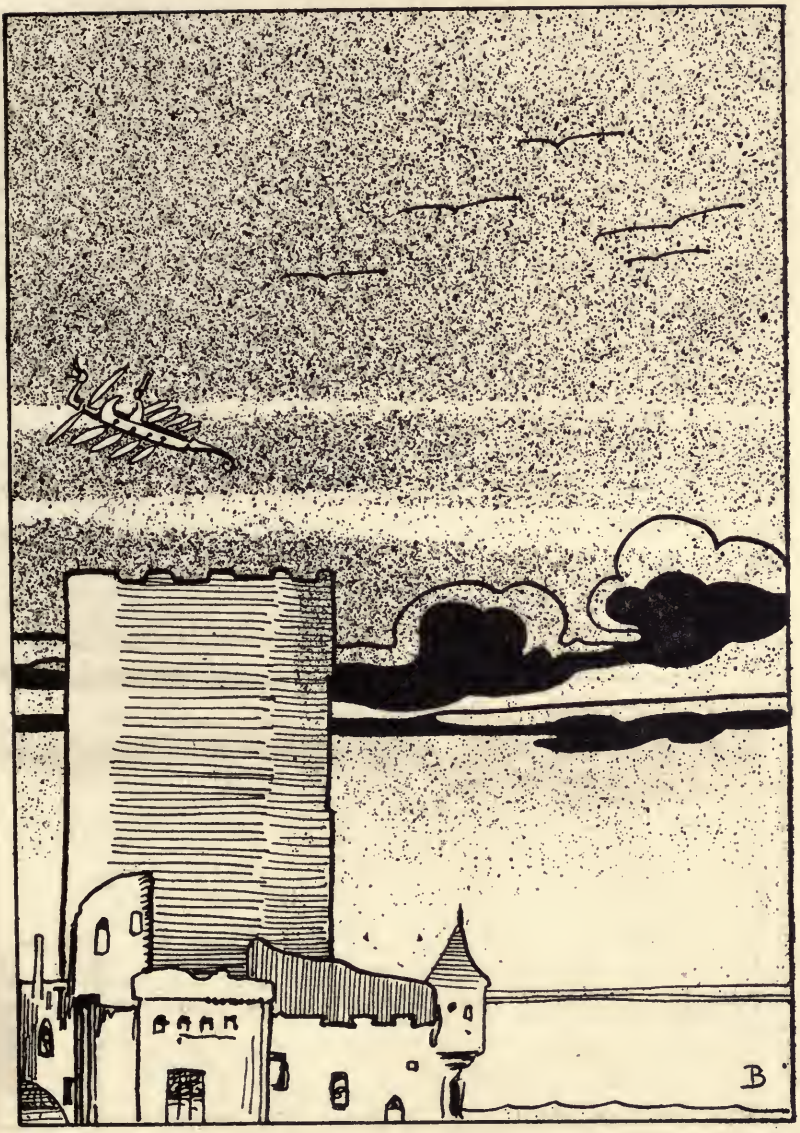
Yes—yes—a long way off in some far corner of the sky they seemed to hear a light, murmuring buzz. They all stood up and listened hard, holding their breath. The buzzing approached.

" It is an aeroplane," said Melinda, who now knew all about aeroplanes. The Carpenter unfolded his own, and looked to see how much petrol he had left. Meanwhile the buzzing became a humming, and the humming grew louder and louder.

" It must be the motor of the Lemon of Gold," cried the Carpenter, and he started the propellers of his aeroplane.



198 THE AEROPLANE ROSE


B

It rose perpendicularly.

The musicians watched anxiously to see what would happen ; their eyes were fastened to the round disc of sky above their heads. Suddenly the Lemon of Gold appeared, high up, a little dark point against a cloud. They could see that it was descending to meet the Carpenter's aeroplane, which was mounting upwards. Then the two machines met, and both flew down together towards the hole where the poor musicians were imprisoned.

There was not a moment to be lost, for what would happen if, in spite of their fatigue, the Cyclops woke up and discovered their flight ?

But nothing disastrous happened. They made their preparations and gathered together their belongings and behaved altogether as civilised people generally do when they are being rescued from a well in which they have been imprisoned by a thousand Cyclops.

They climbed into the compartments of the Lemon of Gold by means of cords, which the airship let down to them. Then they arranged themselves as well as they could in company with the crew of four men in black and white uniforms, and the Captain, who still wore no hat.

The Captain was looking at his map as they rose in the air, and paid no attention to the derisive salutes the musicians were making to the Cyclops, who had woken in fury to find their victims escaped. But the Captain was never talkative. When they asked where he had been he said simply, without removing the field glasses from his eyes :

"When I lost sight of you I was reminded of a cousin of mine in Greenland. So I went to pay a visit to my cousin." And when the musicians tried

WITHOUT REMOVING THE FIELD GLASSES FROM HIS EYES

eagerly to tell him all about their adventures, he told them gravely that he did not care for frivolous recitations.

Still he was a good Captain for all his lack of poetry, and he brought them back without any mistake or hesitation to the middle of Kensington Gardens.

There was a great sensation. The papers were full of it the next day.

CONCLUSION. THE MUSICIANS MEET AGAIN THE DAY AFTER. THEY SHOW EACH OTHER THEIR SOUVENIRS OF THE VOYAGE.

THE following evening the Musicians met together again in the Green Park. Not one of them had spoken of their travels to a living soul. It all seemed so like a dream that they could hardly believe it had really happened until they were all together again and could ask one another questions. They knew then that it could not have been a dream, for how was it possible to suppose that they had all dreamed the same thing at the same time? And besides, a dream would not have accounted for the absence of their friends, Bing and Sun-and-Moon.

There were other indubitable proofs of the reality of their strange voyage. Each one had brought something back from the Weird Islands they had visited, little things of no special value, but which sufficed to prove the truth of their story.

The Boatman held out the starfish he had picked up near the coast of the Island of Cubic Birds, while he floated about in his barrel, smoking cigarettes. The Carpenter held on his knees the famous gilded cock, who had once played the part of a Golden God to those same geometrical birds. He had also the wooden nail, which he had torn from the Chimera.

The Drummer, after a moment's hesitation, unwrapped the head of a Marionette, which he had

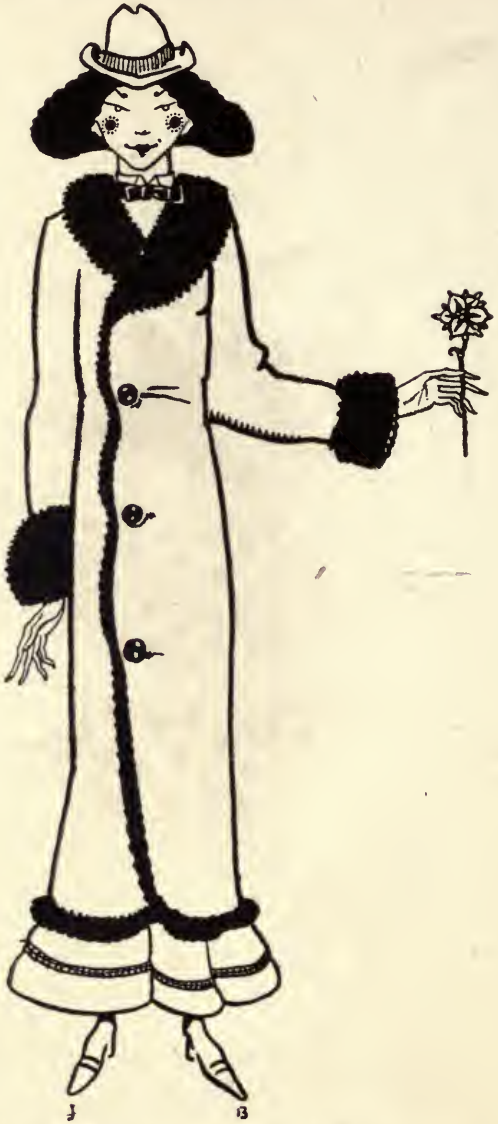
taken from the shop where the Marionettes did their " Repairs and Decorations."

Peter produced the flower, which the Long Woman had thrown at him in her temper. The Friend had the seven little fans, which she had carried off in her flight from the wedding festivities of Bing and Sun-and-Moon.

Melinda was wearing the cap, which she had snatched from the head of the Marionette, who had torn up the paper she wanted to write on.

THE CARPENTER AND THE GILDED COCK

THE DRUMMER AND THE HEAD
OF THE MARIONETTE



PETER PRODUCED THE FLOWER

THE FRIEND HAD THE SEVEN LITTLE FANS

MELINDA WEARING THE CAP

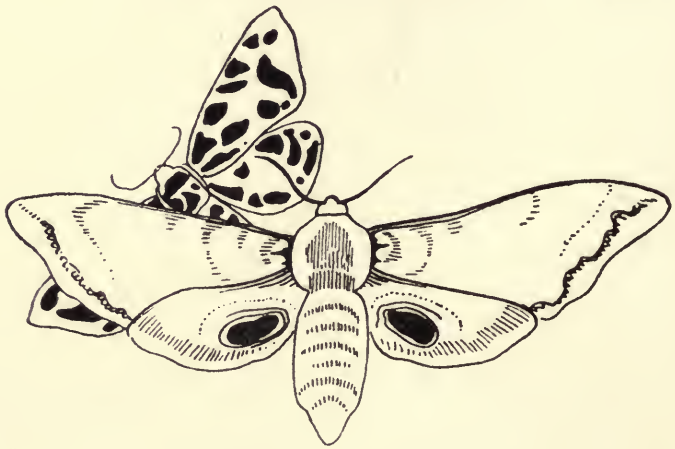
COD

Cod had to admit that he had brought nothing back with him from his travels. But the Carpenter at once drew out of his pocket the paper on which Cod had written a message, when the Baligoors were on the point of skinning him. This he handed to Cod to reassure him that he had not been dreaming.

I must, however, tell you that a girl to whom I told this tale said, when I had finished, that though she quite believed that the musicians had not dreamt their adventures, there was no proof that I myself had not dreamt the whole story from start to finish.

To that I replied that the Musicians had invited me to accompany them on their next journey, and I promised to tell her the story of all that happened to me when I returned, and I shall bring back some proof of my adventures to make her believe me.

I myself should be quite convinced of the truth of all this if I had, for instance, the head of a Marionette in my pocket.



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